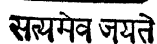






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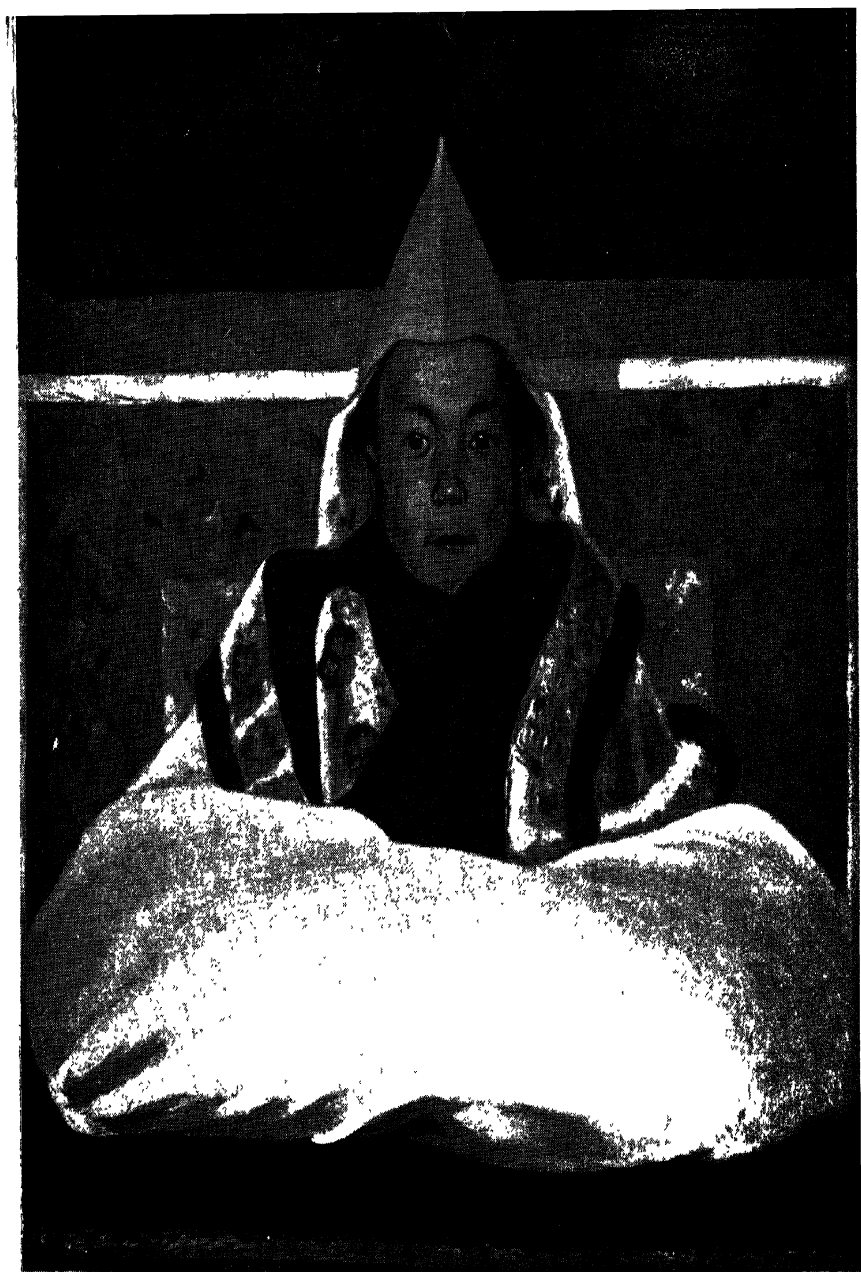
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The Dalai Lama on his throne in the Potala



# THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN  
INDIAN POLITICAL

*By*  
B. J. GOULD

*With a Foreword by*  
SIR ERNEST BARKER

1957  
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*For  
Cecily, James, Lorraine and Jennifer  
and in memory of  
Lorraine  
and Bob, Lieut., 4th-7th Royal Dragoon Guards*



## *Acknowledgements*

I AM grateful to friends who have checked passages which deal with events of which they have first-hand knowledge or have contributed illustrations, and to my Publishers and D. R. Baker for the sketch-maps. For continued help and encouragement I thank my wife, Doreen Grahame-Withers, Hugh Richardson, Arthur Parsons, my brother E. G., Peter Calvocoressi and, particularly and beyond measure, Dick Tottenham.



# Foreword

BY SIR ERNEST BARKER

IT is an honour of the first order—and a pleasure no less than an honour—to be invited by the author of these recollections to write a foreword. It is all the greater an honour because I have done so little to deserve it. It is true that Sir Basil attended some lectures which I once gave, 50 years ago, to Oxford 'Greats' men who were intending to take the examination for the Home and Indian Civil Services. (He justly calls them 'cram' lectures in his book, and I plead guilty to the indictment; but I never had a better audience than I had in the year 1905, when I used to lecture—sometimes with a pipe in my mouth, for the lectures were very informal—to the 'Greats' men who were taking that year's examination.) That is but a small title; but there are some others which perhaps matter more. We both in our time belonged to New College, Oxford, the great and majestic foundation of William of Wykeham. (But we belonged at different times, and Sir Basil was a 'gremial Wykehamist', having been both at Winchester and New College; while I, having been only a fellow of New College, and not one of its undergraduates, am at best but a half, and perhaps only a quarter, of a Wykehamist.) More to the point, and a better title to the honour of writing this foreword, is the fact that I have long been interested in Tibet (though I have never got nearer to it than Darjeeling), and that I have corresponded of late years with Sir Basil (who knows it as few men do) about books and writers on Tibet and the Tibetans. That perhaps is the *causa causans* which explains a foreword which is really in the nature of an unnecessary bush before first-rate wine.

But whatever my title, which hardly matters, I am proud to write some sort of poem to this lay of one of the last minstrels of the British service in India. I have spent only a few weeks in India: I have never studied deeply its history: yet I cannot but



## FOREWORD

feel proud of the men of the 'I.C.S.' whom I have known since I went up to Oxford in 1893. The record of their work—and of that of the men from the Army in India who were their colleagues in the Political Service—is indeed the record of an alien government; it may even be called, though not in its later stages, the record of a despotism. But the 'despotism'—the rule of the temporary 'masters', the temporary 'guardians', of India—was at any rate an enlightened despotism, according to its lights; and for myself I cannot but feel that its lights were bright and shining. A liberal (and I have always called myself, and sought to be, a liberal) cannot love or condone autocracy *per se*; but he can understand, and even applaud, an autocracy which is seeking to transcend itself, to get rid of itself, and to prepare the way for a system of self-government that will take its place. That was the sort of autocracy which I believed that I saw in India, even from the days when I first knew anything of the Indian Civil Service. Men such as the author of this book had not a democratic basis for the authority which they exercised in India; but they worked in close and intimate touch with the people over whom they exercised authority. They lived, as it were, on the ground; they walked on the earth, and among the hills, and by the side of the rivers: they knew as companions the people who tilled the earth, and hunted in the hills, and fished the rivers. They had their ears to the ground: they were in living sympathy with the land in which they worked, and with the people who worked by their side on the land. And what a wealth of experience they had to back their sympathy. They could say with Virgil:

*Quae regio in terris nostro non nota labore?*

The writer of this book knew the North-West frontier and Persia; he knew the North-East frontier and Tibet; he knew Delhi and Calcutta, and the Punjab and Central India, as well as the Northern frontiers. He introduced fish into the rivers; he found and introduced plants in the hills and plains; and above and beyond that he learned the languages of many men (as I doubt if Ulysses did, in spite of all his wanderings)—Persian and Tibetan as well as Indian. Nor did he only learn languages, those keys which unlock the minds of men; he studied them, or at any rate one of them (the language of Tibet), and he sought to penetrate



## FOREWORD

and explain, in Word Books and other works, the arcana of philology.

What a busy life it was! One of our eighteenth-century writers held that the clue to happiness was the exercise of the faculties upon engaging ends, which kept them stretched and satisfied; 'engagement is everything'. The life of the writer of this book was an engaged life. He administered affairs of all sorts and kinds, from playing a part in high and solemn ceremonies at durbars at Delhi and coronations in Tibet, or policing the North-West frontier, to the trial of petty cases in court; and with it all he found time to ride and shoot and fish and botanize, as well as to dive into deep philological waters. This was to live a full life, and, what was more, to help the people among whom he lived and worked to live a full life themselves.

I cannot but feel that this record of service for 37 years in India and on the frontiers of India will stand as a permanent monument of days that are now vanished and gone. Nothing of this kind can happen again, so far as one can foresee the unforeseeable future. There is no longer any room for 'guardians' (as the members of the British service in India have been called) in the world of today and tomorrow. India and Pakistan bear on their own shoulders the vast orb of their fate—as in right and justice they should, and as the British who served them sought (at any rate in the course of this century) to ensure that they should. The guardians are gone; but this record of the last days of guardianship (which to my thinking were some of the finest, though the burden of it grew all the heavier the longer it lasted) deserves to be given to posterity. If the old service belongs to the past, its memory may help to inspire the young men of the future to new forms of service which we can now hardly guess. There is always some service to be done somewhere in this vexed world. And youth will always be generous enough to wish to emulate, and even surpass, the age of its fore-runners. May the young men of the future—our sons and the sons of our sons—be able to say with one of the heroes of the Iliad, 'This is our pride—to be far better than our fathers.' . . . 'Can they be *that*?' an old father may murmur. But in his heart he knows that the answer is 'yes'.

The author of these recollections quotes Tennyson's poem



## FOREWORD

*Ulysses*. I am tempted, as I end this foreword—and I succumb to the temptation—to go behind Tennyson, and to quote the great passage about Ulysses which comes in one of the cantos of Dante's *Divina Commedia*:

Brothers . . . stoop not to renounce the quest  
Of what may in the sun's path be essayed,  
The world that never mankind hath possessed.  
Think of the seed ye spring from!

The world that is still to be possessed is the world of the future. The seed which the young spring from is the past of their fathers. That past is in one sense past. In another sense it goes on into the future along with the young, and helps to nerve their hands for the work which is still to be done.



# CONTENTS

<i>Foreword by Sir Ernest Barker</i>	<i>page vii</i>
I UNDER-SECRETARY, FOREIGN DEPARTMENT, 1910-12	3
II TIBET, 1912-13	17
III IN THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT, 1914-17	33
IV ASSISTANT PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICEROY, 1917-18	49
V EAST PERSIA, 1918-21	59
VI EAST PERSIA, 1921-25	79
VII KABUL, 1926-29	91
VIII POLITICAL AGENT, KURRAM, 1929-30	109
IX POLITICAL AGENT, MALAKAND, 1930-31	123
X WAZIRISTAN, 1931-33	133
XI BALUCHISTAN, 1933-35	150
XII SIKKIM, 1935-45	167
XIII BHUTAN, 1935-45	183
XIV PLOYS, 1935-45	192
XV LHASA, 1936-37	201
XVI LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA, 1940	209
XVII TIBET, 1940-45	234
<i>Index</i>	245







## ILLUSTRATIONS

i	The Dalai Lama on his throne in the Potala	<i>Frontispiece</i>
IIa	In the Chumbi Valley	<i>facing page</i> 20
IIb	Scarf of Victory	20
IIIa	First sight of the Peshawar District	32
IIIb	Baluch tribesmen	32
IVa	Bacha Saqao's followers entering Kabul	102
IVb	On the Kabul aerodrome	102
IVc	Armed villagers of the Kurram Valley	102
v	Sir Abdul Wadood, K.B.E., Founder of Swat	126
VI	Wazir dancers	134
VII	Kanchenjunga	142
VIII	Primula Sherriffae	196
IXa	Yak-hide boat for crossing the Tsangpo	208
IXb	The road to Lhasa. Tsangpo valley	208
x a	Rai Bahadur Norbhu and the Everest permit	210
x b	The Everest permit	210
XI	The Dalai Lama before his Installation	218
XIIa	Cataract operation at Lhasa	226
XIIb	Camp of the Dalai Lama at Rigya	226

The portraits of the Dalai Lama are by Sri Kanwal Krishna, Head of the Art Department, Modern School, New Delhi. The portrait of the Founder of Swat is by Lt.-Col. C. W. Borrowman, Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Watercolours. Photographs Nos. IIa and VII are by Sir Arthur Dash; Nos. IIIa and VI by Major-General Sir Arthur Parsons; No. VIII by Major George Sherriff; and Nos. IXa and b, Xa and b, and XI by Lt.-Col. F. Spencer Chapman.



## M A P S

I General Map	<i>page</i> 2
II Sikkim, Bhutan, Gyantse, Lhasa	18
III The Peshawar District	34
IV East Persia and Baluchistan	60
V North-West Frontier Province	92
VI Kurram Valley	108
VII Swat, Dir and Chitral	124
VIII Waziristan. Main Roads	132

*Drawn by D. R. Baker*

These maps, which show the position of most of the places mentioned in the book, are intended for use with an Atlas.



## NOTE

I BEGAN to write because I thought that a certain small boy might soon be wanting to know what life in the Indian Political Service had been like. Then somebody suggested a book.

The title is a translation of the two central words in the mystic Buddhist formula *Om Mani Padme Hum*. I have chosen it because wherever I served, within or beyond the borders of India and of Pakistan, religion was a large part of the way of life of the peoples with whom I had to deal, and nowhere did I feel more at home than amongst those whose constant thought was of the Jewel in the Lotus.

Besides those whose help is acknowledged elsewhere, I thank the small boy, who has been tolerant when I have been busy. For him I plan to fill a large scrap-book. I want pictures of people and of places as they were when I knew them. An old Black Heart invitation or supper menu, or the record of a run with the Peshawar Vale Hounds, would be a treasure. So also would an American account of the British-American six-metre contest of 1921.



A detailed black and white map of Northern and Central India and surrounding regions. The map shows the Caspian Sea to the west, Persia to the southwest, and the Arabian Sea to the south. Major regions labeled include Persia, Afghanistan, Turkestan, Tibet, and India. Rivers such as the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra are depicted. Key cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras are marked. A scale bar at the bottom right indicates distances up to 500 miles. A box labeled 'Bay of Bengal' is positioned over the Bay of Bengal, and another box labeled 'Arabian Sea' is positioned over the Arabian Sea.



# I

## *Under-Secretary, Foreign Department*

1910-12

HAVING entered the Indian Civil Service in 1907 and served for eighteen months in the Punjab, I was admitted to the Indian Political Service. This Service, of which the Viceroy was the Head, was concerned with most of the self-governing States, which extended over a third of the area of India and accounted for a quarter of the country's population; with the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan; and with areas beyond the frontiers of India such as Aden, the Persian Gulf, parts of Persia, Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Tibet. Its personnel of about 150 officers was recruited approximately two-thirds from the Indian Army and one-third from the Indian Civil Service. Although the Department was known in my early days as the Foreign Department and later as the Foreign and Political Department, and later still was divided into two Departments, External and Political, we were always known as Politicals. To a jealous outside world 'a Political' might be a term of abuse. To us it was a term of glory.

The average strength of the I.C.S. during my time was about 1,200, of whom, by 1939, more than 40 per cent were Indian.

Memories of 'nursery' days in the Punjab and in Central India are vivid, but I will not dwell on them. At Rawalpindi Pat Agnew—whom G. W. Steevens, a famous *Daily Mail* war correspondent, had taken as his model of a District Officer and had described as 'a man with an eye and a mouth and a chin'—guided my early steps, and at Gurdaspur, eighty miles north-east of Lahore, Fred Kennaway introduced me to the arts of revenue administration and land settlement.

My first Political appointment was as Assistant Secretary to the Agent to the Governor-General for the States of Central India, with headquarters at Indore. Thoughts of the year 1909-10 which



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

I spent there recall a visit by Lord Minto the Viceroy; Pitcher of the Central India Horse being air-borne for a moment in a machine of his own design which must have been the first ever to leave the ground east of Suez; Albert Howard's agricultural experiments; the death of King Edward VII; plague; a crisis in the opium export trade; some pig-sticking; shooting sand-grouse as they swooped down, soon after sunrise, for their daily drink of water; and hunting at Mhow under the mastership of Oates, the 'very gallant gentleman' of Scott's last south-polar expedition.

Most of all, Central India means to me my chief, Colonel Hugh Daly. Inheriting the talents and prestige of his father, he had a great way with the Princes of Central India. He loved them, although he could be stern with them, and it seemed to me that many of them loved him. He had the heart of a child and he could melt their reserve. I was told that a sign that one was beginning to find favour in his sight was his giving way to a habit which he had, when at his ease, of sweeping off the very undeceptive wig with which he clothed his perfectly bald head. One day when I had taken him some papers he suddenly, apropos of nothing unless it was my style in drafting, made a remark whose meaning I never wholly fathomed—"Gould, beware of superlatives, and of a woman with a nine in her age."

In 1910 I was appointed to act temporarily as Under-Secretary in the Foreign Department in place of Arthur Jelf, who was wanted for duty in connection with the impending visit to India of the German Crown Prince.

The narrow-gauge railway from Kalka to Simla twisted and turned up steep hillsides. The lower slopes were set with splashes of gold which on a nearer approach were seen to be stunted trees of the giant Indian laburnum. Next came belts of Chir pine. Higher still grew holm oak and forty-foot tree rhododendrons whose deep red flowers were fading as spring gave way to summer. Above them were the deodars of Jakko, the home of many monkeys. Dry aromatic air filled the lungs and stung the nostrils.

It soon became apparent that the characteristic feature of the Government of India was its intimacy. At the head of affairs were the Viceroy, and his Executive Council, in which the Viceroy



## UNDER-SECRETARY, FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

held the portfolio of Foreign, Indian States, and Frontier Affairs, and the Commander-in-Chief was the Army Member. The other Honourable Members were responsible for Home Affairs, Finance, Law, Public Works, and Commerce and Industry. Of the Departments, the Foreign Department was as strongly manned as most, with a staff of one Secretary, two Deputy Secretaries, an Under-Secretary, an Assistant Secretary, a Registrar who had been promoted from the clerical ranks, and a very able subordinate establishment of English, Indian and Anglo-Indian clerks. Far from being Olympians out of touch with the rest of India, the officers of the Government of India were usually men who had done well in their Provinces, to which they would normally return after two to five years in Simla and Calcutta.

As few English children stayed on in India after about the age of seven and most men were due to retire well before the age of sixty, most of the British in India were in the full vigour of life. Money counted for little socially, because to a large extent those who entertained were seniors who had enjoyed the hospitality of their own seniors when they were young.

Some men seemed to be unhappy unless they were surrounded with red office boxes, day and night; but not many people can habitually work well and fast for more than a certain number of hours a day. Most of us lived within a quarter of an hour's walk from our offices, and at the end of a sufficiently long day in office, and perhaps another hour or so at home, one could look forward to dinner in good company, followed by a dance or perhaps an amateur performance at the Gaiety Theatre for those who liked such things, or cards, or billiards, or a quiet evening with a book. Dancing in those days meant good exercise and the expenditure of more than one starched collar. Never can the hospitality of Viceregal Lodge have been more charming than in the time of Lord and Lady Minto and their daughters, and never perhaps has a Viceroy's staff been quite equal to Lord Minto's. At Barnes Court Sir Louis Dane, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, and Lady Dane and their daughters, entertained with rather less formality but equal liberality, and at Snowdon Lord Kitchener's reputation as a host equalled his efficiency in more serious matters. Hotel dances were not considered to be quite the thing. I suppose I danced in thirty or forty private houses. At the chalet of the



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

rambling and picturesque United Service Club, where I was living, one could dine, dance and sup, without stint of good food and wine and to a good band, at a cost of not much more than ten shillings a head, and four times a season the Grand Master and Knights of the Most Hospitable Order of the Black Heart entertained lavishly. The Order, which had been founded by Colonel Newnham Davis ('The Dwarf of Blood of the 'Pink 'Un'), was believed to recognize two rules, that its members must not be living 'in open matrimony', and that no one should be a member, or be invited as a guest, who was not likely to enjoy a good party. Appearance in a Robe of Repentance was required of a Knight who, having lapsed into matrimony, sought re-admission to the Order during a period of grass-widowhood.

At Annandale, 1,000 feet below Simla, in a natural amphitheatre improved by the hand of man, was a sports ground just big enough for three-a-side polo and occasional races (three laps to the mile) and ample for gymkhanas and for the annual inter-regimental soccer tournament. One day Mr. Harcourt Butler, the Foreign Secretary, who was not of slender build, invited me to walk back up the hill with him. During a pause for breath he told me that Arthur Jelf would be going on furlough a few weeks after resuming charge as Under-Secretary and that I was to succeed him permanently as Under-Secretary. Meanwhile I was to stay on in Simla 'on special duty'. A few days later I was told that this special duty would be to write a summary of the policy and acts of Lord Minto's five-year viceroyalty in regard to the Indian States. On thinking the matter over I concluded, somewhat in the manner of Robinson Crusoe, that, if I knew extremely little about the subject, I could at least approach it with an unprejudiced mind. Perhaps I might also have reflected that, while what I wrote would not matter much to anybody, it would involve a lot of reading which would be useful when I succeeded Jelf.

Lord Minto's predecessor as Viceroy and Governor-General had been that very great man and Pro-Consul, Lord Curzon. Into every sphere of the administration he had injected new vigour and fresh ideas. By a cruel act of fate his period of office as Viceroy, and especially the extension of his term beyond the normal five years, overlapped the tenure of an equally great or even greater man as Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener. Either India was



## UNDER-SECRETARY, FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

not big enough to contain them both, or the men themselves were not quite big-minded enough. Kitchener, who had in hand a large programme of Army reform, was convinced that, besides being Commander-in-Chief, he must also himself be the Army Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Curzon, rightly as many have since thought, disagreed. Kitchener prevailed and Curzon's extension of office as Viceroy was cut short.

After the dynamic energy of Curzon the land needed rest, and Lord Minto had been quick to realize this need. Curzon had regarded nothing as alien to his sphere and capacities. It was related that, soon after his departure, a case involving a highly technical and intricate matter, such as Curzon might have welcomed as a fresh opportunity for the exercise of his versatility, reached Minto, with the indication that a choice had to be made between two possible alternatives. Minto noted with his blue chalk pencil 'I agree. M.', and sent the case back to the Department. On another case of similar difficulty he noted 'This is a tough nut for somebody to crack. M.' And so the officials and Princes and peoples of India did get some rest. On the other hand, the 'Morley-Minto' programme of political advance for India marked an early and successful stage in the progress of India towards self-government.

After a few days' study I came to the conclusion that as good a way as any of summarizing Lord Minto's five years' work in the sphere with which I had to deal would be to describe his general policy as having been one of lessened interference in the Indian States, and to group the rest of his actions as 'Miscellaneous'. No one in the Foreign Office had anything better to suggest and His Excellency was pleased to approve the slim printed volume, bound in full red morocco, which resulted. So, in 1911, India bade good-bye and God speed to a great gentleman who in his early days had broken his neck in the Grand National.

In October of that year many of the principal officers of Departments set out to visit various parts of India on their way to Calcutta, where part of their office staffs would be awaiting them. For more, accommodation would be lacking. The Foreign Department had to make the move almost in full strength because it was concerned in all matters of ceremonial, such as visits by Ruling Princes. On the way to Calcutta I had two or three days'



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

fishing in the Ganges near Hardwar and lost a very big mahseer with 100 yards of line out. By favour, as an officer of the Government of India, I had been elected to the Bengal Club, the resort of the senior members of the Calcutta business world. I found the climate of Calcutta not so well suited as that of Simla to a combination of work and play.

Towards the end of March it was time to return to Simla where a dear man and prominent character, known to successive generations of children and of Viceroy's and to everybody in between as Buckie, had invited me to join him and two others as an inmate of his house, Northbank, which he ran as a chummery. All three were a good deal my seniors, but that did not seem to matter. The one strict rule of the house was that each of us should decide, as long ahead as possible, the meals for which he would be out, and that an 'out' decision once made should not be cancelled. This meant that if one of us wanted a quiet evening to himself, or a small party of his own on an evening when the others would be out, he could be sure of it. Besides Northbank, Buckie had a delightful rambling old house called Dukani, six miles out of Simla and a good deal higher, on the Mahasu ridge above the Hindustan-Tibet road. He often invited us and others to stay there from Saturday afternoon to early on Monday morning; and yet others would be invited for lunch on Sunday. Buckie could be trusted in everything, but particularly in the matter of getting together the right people at the right time and making a party go. More formally—but he never could be formal—Buckie was Edward Buck, Baron Reuter's Agent with the Government of India.

During the cold weather Lord Minto had been succeeded by Lord Hardinge, and Mr. Harcourt Butler, who had become head of the newly separated Department of Education, by Sir Henry McMahon. The custom was for new arrivals to call first and the recognized method of paying a call was to leave cards in a box hung up outside a house. If this task was allotted to an orderly or a servant, accidents were apt to happen, as when one day an emissary from Snowdon, who had been entrusted with packets of the cards of several members of the Commander-in-Chief's staff and told to leave two of each in various boxes, put sixteen cards bearing the same name into the box of a lady who lived only a hundred yards away. Sir Henry had no time to spare for such



## UNDER-SECRETARY, FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

matters and it fell to me to toil up many steep approaches to houses on his behalf. In the way of work, I did not know enough of the States and frontiers of India or of many other matters to get full value out of what passed through my hands or to contribute importantly to the forming of decisions, but I did see much of first-class men and their work and especially of L. W. Reynolds on the States side and of E. H. S. Clarke on the Foreign side.

I was given command of a company of the Simla Volunteer Rifles and so rose, without ever being a subaltern, from the rank of private to captain. Frequent early mornings spent on the rifle range at Annandale put me in close touch with clerks who continued to be good friends for many years.

The Delhi Durbar of 1911 was the one supreme personal act of British sovereignty ever performed in India. Early in 1911 Lord Hardinge put Sir John Hewett, Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces, in general charge of the arrangements. As Foreign Secretary, Sir Henry McMahon was Hewett's right-hand man for all matters concerning the Indian States and foreign representatives and he also became responsible, as Secretary to the Orders of the Star of India and of the Indian Empire, for much of the ceremonial. We of the Foreign Office naturally fell in behind Sir Henry. Essential features of the Durbar ceremonies would be the King and Queen's state arrival; individual visits by Ruling Princes to the King and the return of these visits by Lord Hardinge on behalf of the King; a review of troops, including contingents from the Indian States; a parade of Army Veterans; the actual Durbar at which the King, with the Queen at his side, would receive homage, and an Investiture.

I was not much involved in the long-range preparations for the Durbar except in one vital matter. Political officers and other civil officers of certain ranks were entitled and required to wear uniform or court dress, each after his kind and according to his rank. It was notorious that, besides the fundamental difference that the gilt buttons of Political Officers bore 'supporters' (the lion and the unicorn) and those of the officers of other Departments did not, any two officers concerned in any particular function were seldom turned out exactly alike. Mac knew that King George had a keen



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

eye for irregularities of dress and I was told to study the matter. This involved the close reading of an illustrated manual issued under the authority of the Lord Chamberlain entitled 'Dress Worn at Court'. The upshot was that I put myself in the hands of Messrs. Ranken and Co. and got them to provide me with a complete range of the uniforms appropriate to my class. As a further aid to accuracy I was photographed in all my various kits, and copies of the photographs were sent to the Departments of the Government of India and to Local Authorities. The fact that, from modesty or shyness, I had arranged that the photographer should blot out my face provoked kind friends in other Departments to remark that it was now clearer than ever that Political Officers were not chosen for their brains. The Home Department helped—especially on the delicate point of when full dress (with white kerseymere knee breeches), or levee dress (with blue overalls), should be worn—by drafting an explanatory instruction which contained the memorable phrase 'N.B. Trousers will ordinarily not be worn when ladies are expected to be present'.

As soon as the rains were over the officers chiefly concerned with arrangements for the Durbar left Simla for Delhi. All authorities in India having been asked to refer as few matters as possible until after the Durbar, and each man in the Departments tending to take more responsibility than in normal times, work was kept up to date; and although by the time the Durbar was close on us work in the Foreign Office had become what Reynolds called 'a saturnalia of independent sanction', no harm seemed to result. Buckie took Henry Sharp and me on a week-end pheasant shoot—Kalij, Chir, Tragopan, and Manal—on the Little Shali range a few miles east of Simla. The most perfect time of the year in Simla is November, when the air is clear and sharp as a knife. I have recollections of fat marrow bones served on a low table in front of Buckie's drawing-room fire.

Late in November we went down to Delhi where we occupied a village of great tents which had been put up for guests representing foreign governments and officers concerned with Durbar duties. For a large sum Faletti, who had long been steward of the Simla Club, had contracted to feed us and wine us *ad lib*. The pity was that we had so little time to spare for food or drink.

To the south of our camp, towards Delhi City, under the Ridge



## UNDER-SECRETARY, FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

which had figured so much in the Mutiny fighting, there stood the Commissioner of Delhi's Circuit House, now supplemented with a quiet well-designed pavilion for the King and Queen, and surrounded with tents. West, north and east of us lay the tented camps of Ruling Princes and Local Governments. Half a mile to the north-east was the Durbar railway station and, beyond that, the new Durbar amphitheatre. On the same site in 1877 Queen Victoria had been proclaimed Empress of India by Lord Lytton and in 1903 the accession of King Edward VII had been announced by Lord Curzon. The amphitheatre consisted of a covered crescent to seat some ten thousand, faced by an embanked crescent, open to the air, where fifty thousand could sit or stand. In the space between the crescents twenty thousand British and Indian troops would be on parade. Facing the covered crescent was a canopied dais where the King would receive homage. Beyond it gleamed a four-tiered eminence. The lower tiers would be occupied, in succession, by a guard of honour, principal attendants, and General Officers, and from the summit the King and Queen would show themselves to their people.

Mac, a master of ceremonial, left little to chance. Timing and spacing would be important and, as 'King' and with Edward Durand as 'Queen' and with many yards of sacking representing our trains, I spent the greater part of one morning processing between the canopied platform and the eminence. On another day Mac conducted a rehearsal of the investiture which would be held in a vast square flat-topped pavilion of canvas in the King's camp. It was found that with streamlined working the ceremony would take at least three hours. My task at the investiture would be that of No. 2 in a chain of officers handing up decorations of the various Orders on velvet cushions.

In the actual Durbar it would be my job to judge the exact moment at which each of the Ruling Princes and other notables who would do homage to the King should start from his seat on the right-hand side of the covered crescent, while a colleague did the same on the left-hand side. The thorny matter of precedence between Ruling Princes had been worked out by Reynolds and others. In general, difficulties were resolved by dividing the Princes territorially, Rajputana Princes on one side of the crescent, Central India Princes on the other, and so forth. In the case of the



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Rajputana Princes what had appeared to be an insoluble difficulty was evaded by the appointment of the venerable Maharana of Udaipur and Maharaja of Jaipur to be A.D.C.s General, who would stand on either side of the King and Queen.

For several days I was busy with members of Lord Hardinge's staff meeting Ruling Princes on their arrival at one or other of the railway stations. Each was entitled to his salute, of as much as twenty-one guns in some cases, and care was taken to invite attention to the sound of guns booming in the distance. What with rehearsals and these meetings, I learned to sympathize with the leg-weariness of shop-walkers. In the evenings, if time could be spared, it was pleasant to visit friends in other camps.

At some of the chief functions I was present only as a spectator or not at all, but in a few days I saw very much more than memory can retain. One of the disappointments of the Curzon Durbar had been the fact that it had not been possible for the Viceroy to return in person the visits of ceremony paid to him by the Ruling Princes. Lord Hardinge decided that, at whatever expense of his time, he must observe this courtesy on behalf of the King and, as the Under-Secretary responsible for recording any departure from the exact procedure laid down for each visit, I was, I believe, the only person who accompanied the Viceroy on each of his return visits. In general, but subject to traditional variations in individual cases, the procedure was that the Viceroy, accompanied by the Foreign Secretary and the Viceroy's Private and Military Secretaries and other members of his staff, would on leaving his carriage take the salute of a guard of honour mounted by troops of the State, advance up the aisle of the reception marquee, seat himself on the right of the ruler, and offer a few formal words of greeting. This may sound simple, but an obvious topic on such an occasion is the weather, and Lord Hardinge, who had not been in India long enough to get to know the varying weather conditions of December in different parts of India, did not fare very well. "Does Your Highness not find Delhi rather warm?" "Sir, I have been shivering ever since I left Travancore." "Does Your Highness not find Delhi rather cold?" "Sir, the heat is somewhat exhausting compared with Chitral." Formal hospitality would be offered according to the custom of the particular State—rose-water and betel-nut, garlands of jasmine or of roses and frangipani,



## UNDER-SECRETARY, FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

necklaces of beaten-out gold-leaf, sometimes set with medallions, the tea churned up with butter and salt of Sikkim, or the millet beer of Bhutan served in bamboo stems and sucked through reeds. Behind the Viceroy and the Ruler would stand men waving white yak-tails and bearing maces of silver and gold set with jewels. Or, by contrast, and this was the visit which impressed some of us more than any other, the old Maharaja of Nabha, a Punjab Sikh State, dressed in a simple long white coat and in thin white jodhpurs, conducted with the utmost simplicity and courtesy a ceremony in the course of which hardly a word was spoken. After a few minutes the viceregal procession would be re-formed and the Viceroy would proceed down the aisle with his staff, re-enter his carriage and set off for another camp. It was a case of out of England into France, out of France into Spain.

The Durbar took place on a perfect cold-weather morning. The rumour had got about that the King would confer a boon and I had asked Reynolds what the boon was to be. "I can't tell you what it is, Nat," he said, "but I do tell you that it is a thing at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle." Victor Dawson, my opposite number in the Home Department, told me that his share in the Durbar would be to stand guard over the printing of the proclamation to be made by the King, to make sure that no white-trousered compositor should seize an opportunity of seating himself on the type and giving the show away.

When I reached the Durbar amphitheatre, the arena was already occupied by detachments of troops of every branch of the forces of the Crown and of the Indian States and the two crescent mounds were filling fast. One by one, the Ruling Princes and high officers of state took their appointed seats. We who were to start them off in turn checked them over and saw that they understood the order in which they were to approach the throne. Then trumpet calls rang out, the King's procession arrived, and the King and Queen walked to the dais. Their Majesties bowed first towards the sector in front of the throne, then towards the troops and the people in the other sector, and seated themselves, surrounded by their pages and personal staffs. Mac, a trim, solitary figure, advanced and asked permission to declare the Durbar open. There was a fanfare of trumpets and a roll of drums. This was the signal for the ceremony of homage to begin.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

First, in unquestioned primacy amongst the Ruling Princes of India, came the Nizam of Hyderabad, simply clothed in a tight-fitting long black tunic and white jodhpurs, with a diamond aigrette of great price on his head. He advanced, bowed, advanced again, bowed, backed, and made room for his successor. Amongst those in my sector was the Gaekwar of Baroda, a man of more modern views than many of his brother Princes. I noticed that he was wearing a frock-coat and that he carried a gold-tipped walking-stick in his right hand. The idea flashed through my mind that it might be a good thing if, as it were by accident, I could trip over his stick and send him on his way without it. He made his way to wait his turn near the throne, approached the King in a less markedly deferential manner than many of the Princes, and on leaving the immediate presence of the King turned his back at an earlier stage than most of the others. After the Durbar there was indignation at the idea that the Gaekwar had not shown due respect to the King. As to this I felt, and still feel, uncertain. It was a simple matter for Ruling Princes steeped in the traditional etiquette of their order to do instinctively, with loyal deference and without servility, exactly what was proper to the occasion, and it was equally a simple matter for British officials to show respect in English style. If a Prince who had one foot in the future and one in the past did not, in a moment when he may have been very nervous, do exactly what was expected of him, I am inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt.

The King and Queen moved in procession to the eminence. The King was proclaimed in English by General Peyton as Chief Herald—he had perhaps the finest presence of any man in the Army—, and in Hindustani by the outstandingly handsome Malik Umar Hayat Khan, Chief of the Tiwanas. A salute of a hundred and one guns was fired. Lord Hardinge announced boons which included the future grant of the Victoria Cross to Indian troops. The Herald called for three cheers. The King and Queen returned in procession to the canopied platform.

The Durbar had been the finest ceremony I was ever to witness. I was puzzled as to why Reynolds should have prophesied that my ears would be a-tingle; but the essence of perfect ceremonial is that it should be simple and dignified.

I saw the King rise and thought that he was about to take his



departure. Then I noticed that he had a scroll of paper in his hand, and from it he began to read. I was close enough to catch the general drift. Towards the end his voice took on a new distinctness and a certain harshness and I heard something about IMPERIAL CAPITAL—DELHI. So the boon was being announced. What exactly was it? Indeed the ears of every man and woman near me were a-tingle. Some had Dawson's printed copies of the proclamation put into their hands. Their neighbours craned over to read them. 'To Delhi!' So the capital of India was in future to be not Calcutta, but Delhi! Would that really be a boon? Who would gain and who would lose? How would Calcutta take it? Was Delhi, which some had regarded as a Cinderella amongst the towns of northern India, really the best place for a capital? Was it sound policy to move the capital away from the sea and from the commercial capital not only of India but of the Middle East? Was Delhi, where one capital after another had become a ruin, a place of good omen for a new capital? The announcement of the transfer of the capital had upset the rhythm of the magnificent diapason of the Durbar. One of the first to recover from the shock was Buckie. He made a dash for the Delhi telegraph office, jollyng his way past police and military guards, got his message off at triple rate, and within five minutes it had reached Reuter in London, before censorship could be imposed and before the fact that the announcement had been made was officially communicated to H.M.G.; and so it was through Reuter that the world first heard the news.

As the Princes departed from the amphitheatre I saw what seemed to me to be a mixing of the old wine with the new—an attendant seated on the roof of a Maharaja's Rolls-Royce, struggling to hang on to a princely emblem in the shape of an enormous red and gold umbrella.

For me, after the Durbar, the incident of chief interest was the investiture. The great pavilion was crowded with those to be invested and their ladies, all in their best. I took up my position, like a worker in a fire-bucket line, to help in handing up the jewelled collars and badges of many Orders. As Mac read out the names in turn, those to be decorated advanced one by one, knelt, and were invested. We soon realized that, although the King made each motion of his hands precisely and with care, we should, thanks to the expertness of the King's staff at ceremonial, be through



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

with the investiture much sooner than we had expected. From time to time the King and Queen would speak to one another, without moving their lips. Half-way through the ceremony I heard the King say to the Queen, "Light's very flickery, my dear." Then there were shouts. A large tent next to the pavilion in which the investiture was proceeding had caught fire and after a few moments we heard the roar of flames. Knowing the ground well and a handy way out from near the throne, I had the idea of seizing the Queen and taking her to safety that way. But the King and Queen went on sitting there as calmly as if nothing unusual were happening and very soon the investiture was proceeding as before.

When the King and Queen had left Delhi, to shoot in Nepal, it was the turn of the Princes to depart and I again became a frequenter of the Delhi railway stations. I found that my sympathy with shop-walkers had evaporated. Practice must have strengthened the muscles of legs and feet. Many tasks which in rehearsal had been wearying were enjoyable when the occasions were real.

Early in the afternoon of a day towards the end of March, when Lord Hardinge was leaving Calcutta, the sky became dark and lowering, the flagstaff on the roof of Government House was struck by lightning, and rain fell in torrents. The escort which was to have taken the Viceroy to the station, soaked to the skin, had to be dismissed. On his processional entry into Delhi nine months later Lord Hardinge, seated on an elephant, was wounded by a bomb. Again Buckie brought off a scoop before censorship could be imposed. When I next visited Delhi, the whole of the country between the Ridge and the Jumna, including the Durbar area, was two feet deep in water. In the end the new capital was built not on the north, but on the south side of Delhi, a long way from the place where the foundation stone of the new City had been laid.



## II

### *Tibet*

1912-13

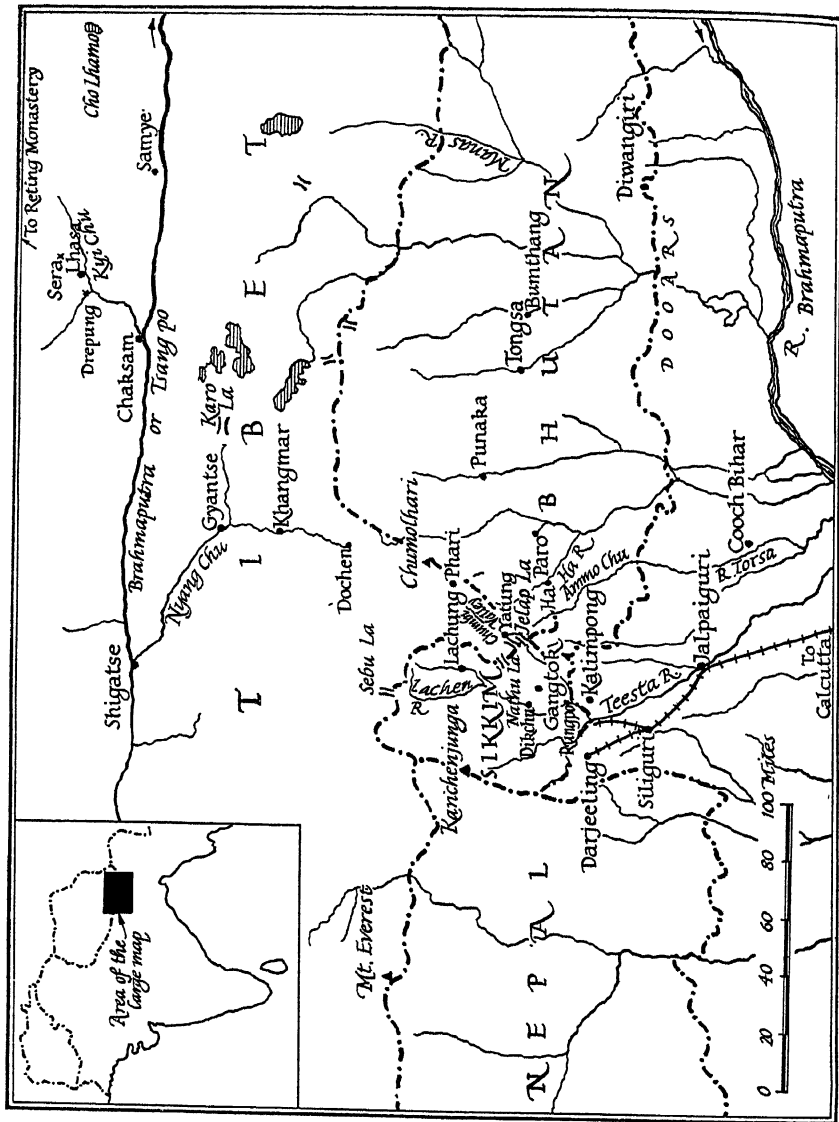
IF anybody had suggested that I was likely ever to see Tibet, I should have laughed. It was all due to half a brick. I was in Calcutta in the spring of 1912 and was expecting, after a few months' leave, to be posted to the North-West Frontier. One of my duties as Under-Secretary was to find men for jobs; Rosy Weir, the British Trade Agent at Gyantse, was engaged to be married and was in a hurry to get away; nobody seemed to be available for what many considered to be a dead-end post; and, as I lay sweltering in bed with water on the knee due to a fall caused by stumbling over that brick, which had been hidden behind the back-screen of a tennis court, a few months in the cool of Tibet seemed attractive. So I volunteered and the offer was accepted with thanks. A week later we moved back to Simla.

Obviously the first thing to do was to find out how one got to Gyantse and what was going on there. I was told that the best route would be back to Calcutta and from there by railway to Siliguri at the foot of the Himalayas, then by mountain railway to Darjeeling, across the Teesta Valley by pony to Kalimpong, and on by pony fourteen stages to Gyantse, where David Macdonald was holding temporary charge in addition to his permanent charge as British Trade Agent at Yatung in the Chumbi Valley near the Indian frontier. It appeared that these Trade Agencies, which had been established under treaty, were more or less of the nature of Vice-Consulates, but were called by another name in view of the indefiniteness of the political relations between China and Tibet.

As to what had been going on recently, I was told I could read all the recent reports in the files of the Indian Foreign Office. From them I could get no clear picture except for the facts that there had been a revolution in China and there had been fighting



## II SIKKIM, BHUTAN GYANTSE, LHASA





## TIBET

between Tibetans and Chinese garrisons at Lhasa and elsewhere in Tibet. The Dalai Lama was a refugee in India. As British Trade Agent I should be serving under Charles Bell, the Political Officer in Sikkim, who was responsible also for our relations with Bhutan. He was probably then on tour in some part of his extensive charge. Otherwise he might have invited me to visit him at his headquarters at Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. Or perhaps he might not. He, like many other good men, was disposed to let a newcomer see things for himself and form his own conclusions. While he had great local knowledge and would fight to the death to maintain what he knew to be right, he was too modest a man to curb the liberty of a newcomer.

Kalimpong was the chief entrepot for trade between India and Tibet. I have clear and happy memories of the place as the home of Dr. and Mrs. Graham. To have passed through Kalimpong and not to have been their guest at the Manse would have been unthinkable.

From Kalimpong the mule track, which was the high-road to Tibet, crossed two outlying spurs of the Himalayan foothills and then rose steeply towards the frontier at the Jelap La—14,300 feet. Then it led down to Yatung—9,000 feet. Then up again for fifteen miles through the gorge of the Amo Chu until, six miles below Phari, we found ourselves on the edge of the treeless plateau country of Tibet. A few miles north of Phari, we cantered over gentle slopes which formed the watershed between the northern and southern faces of the eastern Himalayan mountain system. Above us to the right towered the virgin peak of Mount Chumolhari. From there on for ninety miles to Gyantse our route followed the course of the Nyang Chu river. Four miles short of Gyantse I was welcomed by David Macdonald and a guard of honour provided by the mounted infantry of his escort. From time to time I had to dismount to exchange white silk scarves of greeting with Tibetan officials.

At Gyantse we were a small community. The escort, which we were entitled to maintain under treaty, consisted of some 100 men of the Mahratta Light Infantry under the command of Bob Turner. Their medical officer, who acted also as Civil Surgeon, was Robert MacGregor—a man quick to pick up a language and to gain the confidence of patients of all classes. Martin and Grindrod were



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

ex-soldiers who worked the telegraph line from India to Gyantse, which, like the escort, was provided for by treaty. On the journey my companion had been Norbhu, who was destined for many years to be a man of ever increasing importance on the Tibetan scene. The Trade Agency, a cluster of Tibetan buildings constructed of mud brick, stood a hundred yards from the right bank of the Nyang Chu river. Beyond it, half a mile away to the north-east, was the town of Gyantse, dominated by its fortress, the Jong, and by its monastery. Gyantse with its population of some 5,000 ranked, after Lhasa and Shigatse, as the third town of Tibet. Shigatse lay four marches away to the north-west on the bank of the Tsang Po (the upper waters of the Brahmaputra). Lhasa, two marches north of the Tsang Po, was nine marches to the north-east. A march means round about fifteen miles.

David Mac and Norbhu had arranged that my arrival should take place at an auspicious hour on an auspicious day. In Tibet it is the custom to welcome a newcomer with gifts of food—flour, butter, grain for horses, and eggs which are usually far beyond their first freshness. These are sent through servants who are rewarded handsomely. Further contact is considered inauspicious until the traveller has had two or three days to recover from the fatigue of the journey. Invariably the first enquiry is whether one feels exhausted by travel. Tea, buttered and salted in the Tibetan fashion, is produced and normally, after a formal conversation, the visitor takes his leave with apologies for having taken up so much valuable time. One day the senior Chinese officer present at Gyantse called. With the help of two interpreters, one of whom knew Hindustani and Tibetan, while the other knew Tibetan and Chinese, the usual questions were asked and answered. "And to what," my visitor enquired, "do we owe the pleasure of being privileged to welcome Your High Excellency to Gyantse?" I replied that I had wished to visit a very interesting country and to make the acquaintance of eminent persons like himself. On his putting much the same question again, I replied much on the same lines as before. This however did not content him and he continued, "Sir, please be frank. You say that you have come here direct from Simla, the headquarters of your employers, the Government of India. Permit me to enquire in what manner you





In the Chumbi valley

Scarf of victory









## TIBET

offended them. Why did they send you away to such a distant and undesirable place?" On being asked in turn how it had come about that he also was in Tibet, he replied, "That is a long and painful story which I will recount to you at some other time." It appeared that service in Tibet was not well liked by Chinese officials.

In Tibet a visitor does not pay a first call empty-handed. By the end of a morning I would find that I had received presents of furs and skins, locally-made rugs and rolls of cloth, eggs, and perhaps a finely wrought metal teapot or some other object of Tibetan or Chinese art. When the time came for me to pay a return call, the gifts would be reciprocated on a liberal scale.

The general political position soon became clear. China was in a state of revolt against the last representative of the Manchu dynasty—a young boy dominated by his mother. The Chinese troops under the Chinese Amban, or Governor, at Lhasa, discontented at having received no pay, had revolted and the Tibetans had turned against them and were besieging them. At Shigatse and Gyantse also the Chinese had lost control. The Chinese were home-sick and the Tibetans were anxious to be rid of them and to secure the return of the Dalai Lama from India.

When I decided to report these matters to the Government of India, my staff pointed out that I seemed to be taking a lot of trouble over stale news. They were able to show me that most of what I had pieced together had already been reported. I on the other hand had read all the reports in Simla and had been able to make very little out of them. I was not a little pleased when I heard from the warm-hearted Tony Grant, who dealt with my report in Simla, that it was just what had been wanted, and I was pleased too when I found the gist of it reproduced in two articles in *The Pioneer*, the leading newspaper of northern India. The incident provided an early lesson in the principle that what busy men in Simla liked was simple connected reports.

There was plenty to do. A large and genial Sapper named Bartlett arrived from India to build new quarters for the Trade Agency on a site a quarter of a mile from our present quarters. Their design was perhaps better suited to Indian than to Tibetan conditions; the buildings would cover more ground than it might be easy to defend in the event of attack (it was only eight



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

years since General Younghusband had forced his way to Lhasa and dictated terms of peace); and the site was on alluvial ground, in an angle between the Nyang Chu river and a tributary, liable to flood suddenly, which flowed in from the direction of the route to Lhasa. But it would have been useless for a newcomer to suggest any major change. The building must be completed before winter. The collection of materials included the carrying or dragging of timber from the Chumbi valley, 120 miles away. Sun-dried bricks of clay mixed with short straw had to be made and materials, such as nails, hinges and glass, carried up from India on mules and yaks. Some of the skilled workmen were Indian, but Tibetan men, women and children provided most of the labour. The Indians worked in silence, but the Tibetans always sang at their work and the louder they sang the harder they worked. Many of the songs were folk-songs; but song-leaders in Tibet are famed for making up topical verses. Laughter and giggles would greet some improvised sally, directed perhaps at Bartlett or myself, or at some pretty girl who had been out late the night before.

It soon became apparent that there were serious shortages in the materials which had been brought up from India the previous year and in the stacks of building stone which had been collected for foundations; so I set to work to find out the facts and to try, in accordance with certain extra-territorial powers with which the Trade Agent was invested, the two men who appeared to be chiefly responsible. I sentenced both to a term of imprisonment and sent them off under escort to India. This was not to the liking of a highly respected Indian contractor—afterwards a very good friend—who was the employer of one of the culprits. His first step, at an early stage of the case, had been to engage a lawyer to appear in my court. Being unused to riding and finding the action of a Tibetan pony too rough for his anatomy, the lawyer sent his employer a large bill for what he called 'moral and intellectual damages' and returned to India by gentle stages. The contractor's next step was to approach the Government of India where, as I found later, the case came to the notice of the Law Member of the Viceroy's Council. He was a man, no doubt renowned in the law, recently arrived from England. The upshot was that, when the two men were already safely in gaol in India, it was held that their



## TIBET

trial had been irregular. The point was not that there was any reasonable doubt about their guilt, or that the punishment was excessive, but that the matter ought to have been investigated by one person, tried in the first instance by another, and committed to a Court of Session. As I was the only person who held any judicial powers at all it was not quite clear how this could have been done.

On two or three mornings a week, if there was not a dust-storm (there usually was one in the afternoon), we played polo—as many as eight chukkas of ten minutes each. The ground was of hard-baked mud, about 100 yards by 50. A mud wall two feet high helped to keep the ball in play and the little hard-mouthed ponies on the ground. It was not a game for rich men only. The ponies cost an average of £10 and the mounted infantry played on their Government ponies. It was under even more primitive conditions that polo had first been evolved. I have never enjoyed polo more than at Gyantse. We usually played on days when the mail from India was due. In winter the best time for a bath was after polo, in front of a hot fire. The bath would be followed by a bucketful of water with ice floating in it. Otherwise one was apt gradually to become chilled. Then lunch and an afternoon with letters and newspapers.

As the weeks passed, relations between the Chinese in Lhasa and the Tibetans became no easier, and after a time they agreed to invite the British to help them to come to terms. Laden La, a police officer who had special knowledge of the Tibetan language and of Tibetan affairs, had arrived from India and it was arranged that he should go to Lhasa. One day, to my surprise and joy, I received a telegram from Simla in which I was told that I could go too. But no. Two hours later a 'clear the line' telegram arrived, telling me that I must on no account go. I learned afterwards that Lord Morley, who was then Secretary of State for India, had seen the papers and had put his foot down. This was caution, and perhaps wisdom, on his part. But it seemed at the time that a great opportunity had been missed.

With Laden La's help, terms were arranged for the evacuation of Chinese personnel via Gyantse, Yatung and India, and it was now possible for the Dalai Lama to return from India to Tibet. I went down to Phari and travelled with His Holiness as far as



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Khangmar, two stages short of Gyantse, where a short-cut to Lhasa takes off from the main route via Gyantse. Two and a half years before, in mid-winter, he had reached the Indian frontier by forced marches, a fugitive from the Chinese. Now the Incarnation of the God of Mercy, who was also the King and the High Priest of Tibet, was returning to his own people. To do him reverence and honour Tibetan men and women, who had travelled in from all directions, had cleared every stone from the route and stood by it burning incense. Riding a fine mule, which in Tibet is a more honourable mount than a pony, he covered some twenty-five miles a day. At small monasteries he would halt, grant audience to all comers, receive their simple offerings, and bless them. His principal tent was of Mongolian pattern—a light circular wooden framework, with a carpet on the floor, a thick quilt all round the walls of the tent to sit on and to lean against, a brazier in the middle if the weather was cold, and an open space in the middle of the roof, to let in light and to give ventilation. His manner and his voice were quiet and courteous. His interests seemed to include anything that was happening anywhere in the world. More than once, when I was taking tea as a guest in his tent, he said how greatly he appreciated the hospitality which had been extended to him during his years in India. Of Charles Bell he spoke as of a brother.

At Khangmar the Dalai Lama said that he would be interested to see a game of polo. He was due to leave for Lhasa very early the next day and there was not a clear bit of level ground anywhere near. By working long into the night we managed to remove most of the bigger stones from a field which was lying fallow; and by breakfast time I had been awarded a long white silk scarf of victory as captain of the winning team in my one and only Polo International—India *v.* Tibet.

A few weeks later the Panchen Lama—known also as the Tashi Lama—passed through Gyantse on the way from his monastery of Tashi Lhunpo near Shigatse to Lhasa, and was in his turn entertained at a polo match. Such patronage made polo all the more popular both with players and with spectators.

Meanwhile parties of Chinese had begun to arrive at Gyantse from Lhasa on their way to India. The Tibetans treated them with courtesy and provided them with ample supplies. The chief worry



## TIBET

was whether they would be able to get well across the Indian frontier before bad winter weather set in. In the area between Lhasa and the Himalayan foothills in India winter conditions vary greatly from year to year. If the wind is from the north, the weather may be very cold, but there can be little rain or snow because winds from the northern plains of Tibet are dry; but, if southerly winds sweep up from the damp plains of Bengal, there may be heavy snow at any time after the middle of October. I had reached Dochen, thirty-five miles north of Phari, with the main body of Chinese, when towards nightfall snow began to fall and by the early morning the whole of the wide flat plain was a sheet of white. Tibetans often carry snow glasses; or, if they have none, they bring one or two strings of their pigtails across their eyes to lessen the glare. But the Chinese for the most part had neither glasses nor pigtails. Bright sun over a thin layer of ground-mist produced a strong glare and before that day's march was over many of the Chinese were snow-blind.

The last of the Chinese to leave was General Chung Yin. He was a mountain of a man, several inches over six feet, and broad and thick in proportion. Two days out from Gyantse I invited him to dinner. Christmas was near and I had with me a very large turkey and the usual trimmings. Our appetites were healthy, but three times I carved him a helping twice as large as any of ours. Finally I handed to him what remained of the bird on its dish. Next day it was reported that he had enjoyed the hospitality we had been able to offer and that on returning to his camp he had sat down to a proper meal. I heard later that on his return to China he was tried and executed.

The winter continued to be severe. Having occasion to travel from Phari down to Yatung, I did part of the journey on ski. They had recently arrived from England and I was wearing skis for the first time. The man who had kindly sent them out suggested that I might become a member of the Alpine Ski Club, which had recently been formed. And so I became a member of a select body of experts, entry to whose ranks is now closely guarded. I spent that night in three feet of snow in a forty-pound tent, as the middle man of three, the other two being Nepalese who were repairing the telegraph line. We kept each other splendidly warm. On the way back a few days later, with Laden La,



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

we still had several miles to do across the Phari plain, at about 14,000 feet, when daylight began to fail us. We ought perhaps to have stopped where we were and made the best of things for the night in a small ruinous hut, but we went on. A cold foodless night had not seemed attractive. After a time Laden La and some of the others became lazy, as is apt to happen in snow, and wanted to lie down; and I kept kicking them to make them move. I seemed to be feeling my toes inside my boots all right, but after we had reached Phari, when I took my boots off in front of the fire, I found that they had stuff like brittle snow in them and that my toes were white and as hard as stones. After two hours' rubbing the circulation came back and I went to bed. In the morning there were great blisters on my toes. I did the rest of the journey to Gyantse by pony. It was luxury to be back in a cosy room in front of a hot wood and yak-dung fire and to swallow many cups of steaming hot tea, stiff with sugar. In course of time several toenails fell off and doctors told me that I had lost them for ever. A vet was more cheering. He pointed out that, if a horse's hoof is damaged high up, it takes a long time for a sound hoof to grow again. He prophesied that in a couple of years I should be all right. He spoke truly.

Bartlett's efforts had resulted in our being able to move into the new Trade Agency before mid-winter. That meant a house-warming on a large scale; but it was a cold occasion. The recognized form of entertainment was to hire a travelling troupe of actors and singers. They started off at 11 o'clock in the morning and carried on until after sunset. The stage was the courtyard round which the officers' mess and bedrooms were built, with store-rooms on the ground floor. The balcony and the verandah below were crowded with guests of all ranks. Food and drink were brought round time after time. Each guest presented a scarf in token of his good wishes and to bring luck to the new building. As the performance was drawing to a close, the air became thick with what looked like streams of comets. These were silk scarves into which the guests had knotted coins.

There was frequent interchange of hospitality with the Tibetans, both lay and monk. On the more formal occasions the food provided by our hosts was in the Chinese style of a generation or two ago—various soups, pork and vegetables and eggs and fish cooked



## TIBET

in many different ways, sharks' fins, birds' nests and many other delicacies, all eaten with chopsticks. Lunch would end with bowl after bowl of rice, or of home-made vermicelli or some other form of pasta, with mince. For drink there was the everlasting tea brewed in Tibetan style, or the white barley beer called chang, or strong home-made spirit. Special inducements to have another little drink took the form of dice, or of 'fingers out', or of the Chinese game of scissors, paper and stone (indicated by the hand being held out with two fingers apart, or flat, or with the fist closed; scissors cut paper, paper enfolds the stone, and the stone blunts scissors). All drinks of course were free and it was the loser who had to swallow a cupful. A man whose brain seemed to be entirely disconnected from the rest of his body was the local District Magistrate, or Jongpen. Nothing affected him. Unlike him, the Ta Lama, a high dignitary of the Church, was a professed teetotaller. He was fond of discussing art. When he called, a full bottle of Kummel would be placed at his side and when he had finished it he would leave, declaring that it had done him good. He reminded me of the story which the philosopher H. W. B. Joseph of New College used to tell—I forget what exact philosophical principle he was trying to explain—about an eminent personage who, during a teetotal lecture, sipped a glass of milk which a wag had laced with rum, and murmured, when he had finished, "What a divine cow!"

Early in the spring of 1913 I was in camp near Phari. I was told that a Tibetan official had arrived from Lhasa and wanted to see me. After we had drunk tea he rose. With great reverence he produced a letter from the Dalai Lama. Then he summoned four boys. While the Dalai Lama had been in India he had discussed with Bell various plans for the development of Tibet. The letter contained a request that the official, who was named Lungshar, and the four boys and their servants, might be helped to make their way to England and that the boys might there be provided with 'four first-class educations at Oxford College, London'. I passed them on to Bell in Sikkim, and a few weeks later I was instructed to travel with them to England. I asked that Laden La might go too, and this was approved. In accordance with the usual rule I, when serving in my home country, should be entitled to two-thirds of my previous pay. Laden La, on the other hand,



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

would be entitled to 50 per cent more than his Indian pay. This seemed a very fair arrangement.

The delay was unfortunate. During the interval Lungshar had come under the influence of Chinese agents and had lost heart about the England project. The boys had changed their Tibetan kit, which they knew how to wear and in which they looked well, for one blue suit each, which they appeared to have been wearing day and night. But they were still keen. When we should be able to start for England seemed uncertain. Two firms of agents had reported that they could not let us have passages in the near future. Having provided the boys with light-weight clothes in Tibetan style—which of course they did not like, because they wanted to look and to feel English—we started off for Delhi, where I went to see Messrs. Thomas Cook. Their prompt reply was “Fifteen P. & O. passages? Yes, certainly, next week, and you shall have the cabin numbers tomorrow morning.” We filled in time with visits to Indore and Bhopal and to the great Buddhist stupa at Sanchi.

With the help of a steward who on rough days produced what he called ‘Tabasco sauce with a dash of soup in it’ we survived the voyage. Of the boys, to whom we gave shortened names, Mondo (a monk), Kyipup and Gongkar were about sixteen, and Ringang was about twelve. With school in view, we did not exaggerate their ages. The boys had naturally been impressed by their first sight of railway engines and steamships. I was all the more delighted therefore when, at Aden, Ringang, seeing a sailing-boat close-hauled, said, “We thought engines and steamships wonderful; we know how coracles are used on Tibetan rivers; and at Indore we went for a row on the lake. But this, a boat sailing into the wind, is the real marvel.”

On looking up the files of the *Daily Mirror* at the British Museum I am reminded that the boys’ first impression of England was, “Why so much green grass, and do you not plough it up in the spring?”

My brother, known to Wellingtonians as E. G., had arranged a house for us at Heath End, between Farnham and Aldershot, next door to Mr. Courtenay Welch, a well-known Army crammer. On the first evening we had nearly finished a good filling tea when there was the din of iron striking iron. It had been dis-



## TIBET

covered that the Tibetan servants would be sleeping on the same level as their masters. This Lungshar could not, and would not, tolerate. They must sleep on the floor.

Lungshar had brought with him his attractive wife. She wanted to be dressed in English style, and one day I found myself involved in trying to explain to a shop assistant certain needs which were being murmured, amidst giggles, on the other side of a screen.

To help the boys to learn English we arranged for visits by a Berlitz teacher. His method appeared to be not to rely at all on translation or on lists of words, but to teach in a concrete way. I watched one morning for the best part of an hour while, with great patience, and with no other equipment than a box of matches, he taught such phrases as 'The match is in the box', and so forth. He was succeeded by Mr. Caesar, a retired board-school master, who condemned his methods, but seemed to go a long way in imitation of them. At a later stage Mr. Courtenay Welch kindly arranged classes.

By now it was time to think about a Public School. The matter was discussed at the India Office by Sir Arthur Hirtzel, Evelyn Shuckburgh and myself. Between us we represented Harrow, Eton, and Winchester. Having each in turn faulted our own school, we all in the same gasp said 'Rugby', and I was told to find out whether Rugby might be willing to play. Dr. David, the headmaster, was open-minded and said that I might ask H. H. Hardy, with whom I had been at New College, to have a look at the boys and report on them. Hardy did not seem to be much amused. He said he was sure he would hate the boys and would not hesitate to report exactly what he felt. But he agreed to come to spend a night or two at Hayling Island, where we were staying at the time. When he left, he said that he did like them and would be bitterly disappointed if he could not get them into Rugby. They went there in the autumn. At first they were boarded separately, but before long they were taken into a regular House. With the exception of Ringang, who was much the youngest and went on later first to London University and then to Birmingham University, where he studied engineering, none of them became great scholars. But they never ceased to love Rugby; and Gongkar was reported on as well up to standard



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

when he became an officer in the Indian Army during the 1914-18 War. Most unfortunately he died of pneumonia after a few months' service. What was said to make the boys popular was their readiness to laugh at all times, and especially if they got a hack on the shins at Rugger.

About the middle of June we set out on a tour in cars to see something of England and of such things as factories. We visited Platts's engineering works, where we were nobly regaled on hot strawberry tart; the printing works of a provincial newspaper, which in a moment set up in linotype an account of our visit; a small cotton factory, which did every process from the opening of the bales of cotton to the packaging of dish cloths; and Marconi's factory at Chelmsford. At the end of the Chelmsford visit the man who had kindly shown us round asked what had interested the boys most. They all said, "The circular saw."

Our tour was cut short by a telegram from the India Office. The Dalai Lama had sent by Lungshar and the boys gifts for King George and Queen Mary. Could we have them ready for presentation at Buckingham Palace in three days' time? It was a matter of returning to Heath End as quickly as possible, to prepare the presents and Lungshar's and the boys' ceremonial dress.

King George was to present new Colours to the Irish Guards. It had been his own idea that the occasion would be suitable for the presentation of the Dalai Lama's gifts. These included sets of emblematic offerings, a five-hundred-year-old saddle which had belonged to a Tibetan King, a helmet, sword and armour, and bags of gold dust.

It was a fine summer's day and, as we went down Whitehall in open carriages in our finery, we attracted a good deal of attention, which was reflected in the illustrated papers next day. The King and Queen were gracious and clearly interested. After our ceremony we went to a large window overlooking the Palace garden. The parade was led by Lord Roberts, spruce and alert as most men of half his age.

Laden La was to remain on duty for some time longer. My own period of duty had come to an end and I was at the beginning of a few weeks' leave before returning to India. But Lungshar had again turned awkward and I felt that I had perhaps better stay with the boys for a few more weeks. Amongst other things, he



## TIBET

argued that Rugby was neither 'Oxford College' nor in London. When I saw Shuckburgh at the India Office I told him that I felt rather shy because I had just received from him a letter expressing the Secretary of State's high appreciation of the efficiency and skill with which I had performed my duties. His reply was "Please don't bother. We always say that." As it was the only occasion on which I was ever to receive such praise, his remark was somewhat saddening.

Return gifts from the King to the Dalai Lama included a casket of gold and silver ornaments specially manufactured by Garrard & Co., a Souter saddle, a Wilkinson sword, two hammerless ejector guns by William Evans, the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' bound in golden morocco, and a telescope by Dollonds—who refused to charge more than £20 because they said that a more elaborate instrument would be of little use in unskilled hands. At every stage of the journey from Sikkim to Lhasa the gifts were received with royal honours, as if they had been the person of the King.

Meanwhile, efforts were being made in diplomatic circles in London and Peking, and by Bell in communication with Lhasa, to bring about a settlement between China and Tibet, and it had been agreed that plenipotentiaries representing China, Tibet and His Majesty's Government should confer in Simla. For this Simla Conference of 1914 Sir Henry McMahon, the British plenipotentiary, called in as his expert advisers Bell from Sikkim and Archibald Rose of the British Consular Service in China. I was appointed to act in Bell's place as Political Officer in Sikkim and thus, by a stroke of luck, I came to hold for some months, at the age of thirty, the same post which I was destined to occupy, after a long interval, during my last ten years of service. I shall be writing about Sikkim and Bhutan in later chapters. Looking back, I remember 1914 as a time when I formed many friendships, not only in Sikkim and Bhutan, but also in Calcutta where I had business in connection with projects for developing the resources of Sikkim in copper, timber and hydro-electric power, and for establishing tea gardens in the foothills of Bhutan. In the summer I passed an examination in the Tibetan language.

The outbreak of the Great War in August, 1914, put an end to the negotiations. A few days after the declaration of war I received



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

from Gyantse a message from the Tibetan Government. It stated that the Dalai Lama placed at the disposal of the King the prayers and the entire resources of Tibet. Within forty-eight hours after it had reached me I was reading a Reuter's telegram which reported a great speech in Parliament by Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary. In it the message of the Tibetan Government appeared as a purple passage.

Bell was due to return to Sikkim in the autumn. Quoting my Volunteer service as a qualification, I asked Government to allow me to apply for military service. I learned afterwards that my request had been considered by the Viceroy as a test case and that he had decided that men should normally stick to the sort of work for which they had been trained in peace. In 1912 I had been earmarked for the North-West Frontier Province. Now I was instructed to report for duty as Assistant Commissioner in the Peshawar District. The two and a half years on and beyond the North-East Frontier had been a fine experience.





First sight of the Peshawar District

Baluch tribesmen









### III

#### *In the Peshawar District*

1914-17

TEN million Pathans live in a region which extends from Chitral to Kandahar and from Kabul to the Indus. They speak Pushtu, have their own traditions of law and behaviour, and claim to trace their ancestry back to the Jews of the time of Solomon.

Soon after the Sikh wars of 1845-49 the authority of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab became firmly established in the trans-Indus Districts of Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan. In Afghanistan the rule of Amir Abdur Rahman (1880-1901) was effective in the areas of Jalalabad, Ghazni and Kandahar. In between lay hard, hilly tracts inhabited by tribesmen who were largely independent.

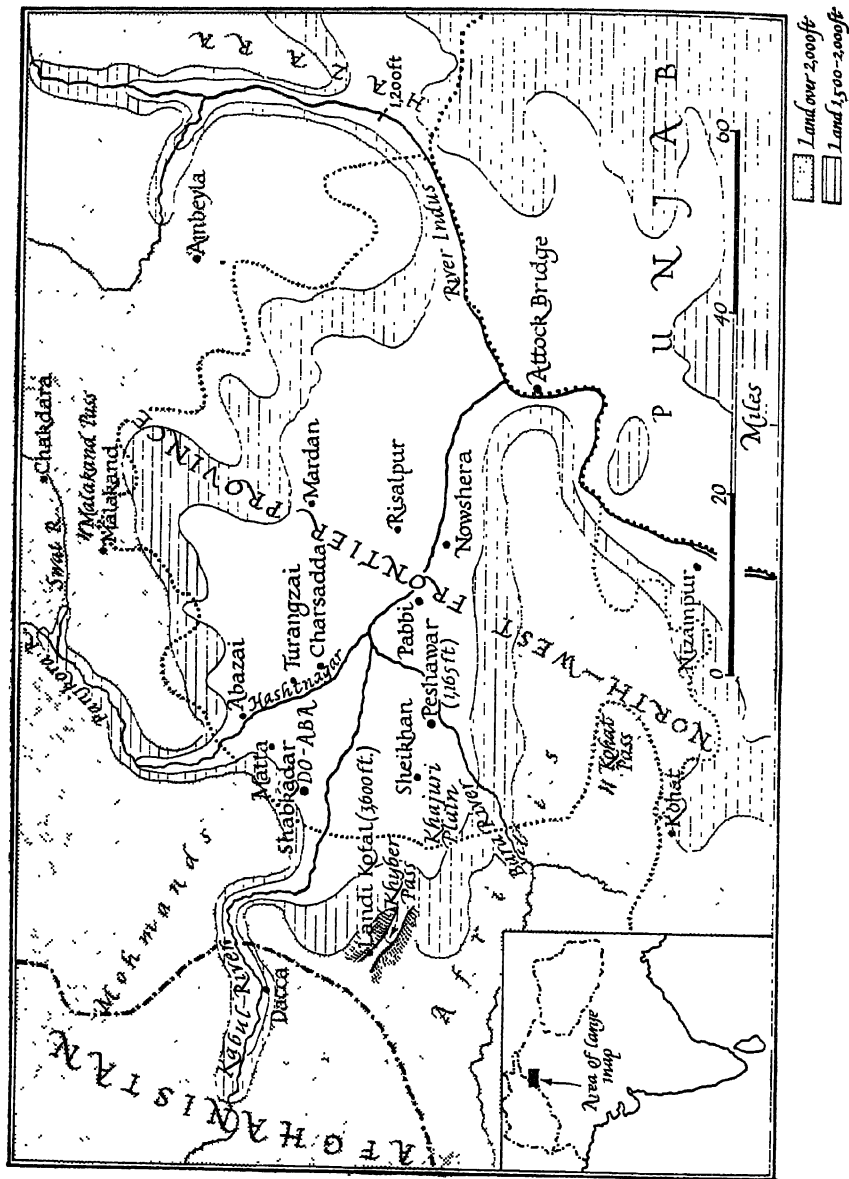
In 1891 Sir Mortimer Durand persuaded the Amir to recognize a line of frontier between India and Afghanistan. In 1901 Lord Curzon created a new North-West Frontier Province under a Chief Commissioner.<sup>1</sup> His charge included the four trans-Indus Districts, the Hazara District between the Indus and Kashmir, and the tracts between these Districts and the Durand Line.

Arrived at Nowshera, I found a letter from Norman Bolton, the Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar. He told me to get in touch with Frank Anson, the Assistant Commissioner of the Mardan sub-division. Frank, who was a master of the art of delegation and never saw any point in doing a job of work himself if someone else could do it even better, handed me over to his wife Maud who was Norman Bolton's sister. She knew all the ropes and set to work to teach me a few of them. Amongst other things I gathered that Nowshera was apt to be regarded as a sort of

<sup>1</sup> Map of North-West Frontier Province, page 92.



### III THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT





## IN THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT

nursery where a Political new to the N.W.F.P. could do no particular harm.

I was soon to discover that for a beginner in the Province life would not by any means be an empty dream. There were cases, criminal and civil, to be tried, all the evidence being given in Pushtu of which I did not know a word; and before each day's work, in accordance with the custom of the N.W.F.P., khans (notables) of the sub-division would pay a call, to take stock of the new Assistant Commissioner and perhaps, also in accordance with local custom, to put in a word about some case to be heard that day, or at least to let it appear to those who 'dwelt under their shadow' that they had done so. A frequent visitor was Mian Akbar Shah, tall, stately, and with long yellow teeth, in flowing white robes (Pathans make allowance in their voluminous lower garments for the belief that the coming Messiah will be born of a man). On the occasion of his first call he stated that he did not care to say how glad he was to welcome me because he knew that soon he would be saying how sorry he was to bid me farewell; for that was the way with Assistant Commissioners posted to Nowshera.

Nowshera was the headquarters of a Brigade. A Cavalry Brigade was stationed at Risalpur, two miles off across the Kabul river towards Mardan. Not much caring for a solitary life, I was glad when the 82nd Punjabis promptly made me an honorary member of their mess and invited me to feed with them. The gunners also were very hospitable and it was through one of them that several times I was given a mount on a battery horse for hunting with the Peshawar Vale Hounds. Roney-Dougal, who arranged this, laid down one condition—that whenever possible I would dismount. I stuck to this rule ever afterwards.

On Christmas Day, after receiving greetings from many callers some of whom gave me great loofah-like combs of wild honey, or mahseer which had been caught (? dynamited) in the Kabul river, or fruit or nuts, Roney and I and one or two others set out by boat for a shooting camp at Nizampur. Before we started off down the Kabul river the head boatman, with bowed head and the palms of his hands turned upwards and outwards in supplication, prayed for a safe voyage. Then he pushed out into the current. Where the Indus charges in, a little above Attock, at right



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

angles to the Kabul, it looked as if we should, in spite of the boatman's prayers, be smashed against a high rocky cliff; but a wave surging back from the face of the cliff caught us and we were swept under Attock bridge, past sandy banks where in the low-water season men washed for grains of gold. In the thorn-tree jungles of Nizampur we had some good chikor partridge shooting, bagged a few hare and quail, and soon made progress with a keg of beer from the gunner mess. With the chikor everything seemed to depend on moving the birds in the direction in which they naturally wanted to go—to or from water, according to the time of day. A local Khan joined us with two hawks. There is nothing like hawking to impress the fact that in shooting there is nearly always plenty of time. A partridge beaten out of a thorny patch would make for the next patch not far off. When it was already well on its way, a hawk would be cast and with an easy swoop would catch the bird before it reached safety. The terror of the quarry was shown by the way in which, to escape the hawk, it would hurl itself into the middle of a thorn bush.

In the Pabbi plain towards Peshawar there was evidence of an ancient system of land tenure; ploughed fields up to half a mile in length and some of them no broader than a horse's leap.

Mian Akbar Shah turned out to be right, and when the weather was beginning to warm up I was told to take charge of the Charsadda sub-division. This lay between Mardan and Peshawar and marched with Mohmand tribal territory. A few hours before I arrived there a well-known local mulla who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, the Haji Sahib of Turangzai, absconded across the border into Mohmand territory.

The Charsadda sub-division consisted of two regions. Between the Kabul river to the west and the Swat river to the east were the very fertile lands of the Do-aba (two waters), a small Mesopotamia of which the trade centre was Shabkadar, near the Mohmand border. On the left bank of the Swat river was Abazai, near the gorge where the river issues from the hills. Below Abazai came the Hashtnagar ('eight towns'), of which the last but one towards Nowshera was Charsadda. Until recently Hashtnagar had not been a rich area compared with the Do-aba, but canal developments had greatly increased the cultivable area of the Hashtnagar



## IN THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT

villages, whose rights extended back for miles into what had hitherto been desert.

The Haji of Turangzai soon set to work to incite the Mohmands who, now that they had harvested their crops, had leisure to commit raids. Almost every night there was a raid somewhere in the Do-aba. To strengthen local defence arrangements, a mixed force was brought out from Peshawar and I moved to Shabkadar. I spent the first night on a charpoy on the ramparts. In the middle of the night I heard a heavy flop, but did not take much notice. In the morning I saw a scar on the wall just above me and found a bullet under the charpoy.

A column moved out from Shabkadar for what was planned as a reconnaissance in force, with the prospect of a proper fight next day. A difficulty of the terrain of the Mohmand border is that there is very little depth of open ground between the irrigated lands of the Do-aba and the fringe of the Mohmand hills. In the late afternoon we were looking over the low dry-mud battlements and speculating how things would go next day. Suddenly a rumour began to spread and in a few minutes troops, horses and mules were pouring back into the fort and into the horn-work below the fort. At dusk that evening we were burying dishonoured and dismembered bodies in water-logged holes hastily dug in a grove. Next day the troops moved out again to do battle on a larger scale, but the Mohmands were content with having drawn blood and had cleared off to their hills.

The raiding did not cease, and often there were two or three raids in a single night. The trouble was that the villagers would not keep proper watch. Their rifles were more an attraction than a danger to raiders. If only they would have consented to use shot-guns they might have hit somebody, who could have been identified afterwards by the shot marks, and he or his particular tribal section could have been dealt with. But no, it must be rifles or nothing. Raiding culminated one evening at dusk in an attack on Charsadda. I heard shots a few hundred yards off and soon a large part of the town was on fire. Having secured a fair haul, the raiders made off, leaving one wounded man behind. I did all I could to warn Peshawar by telegraph, but the line had been cut; to inform Abazai by canal telephone, but the line was out of order; and to send messengers to Shabkadar and Abazai. Perhaps



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

I should have done well to go off myself, but there was the blazing town to be thought of. In the end word did get through, just too late, and by the light of first dawn pursuit parties caught sight of the raiders as they re-crossed the border.

In dealing with the fire the citizens of Charsadda were not of much use, but magnificent work was done by Ghilzais from Afghanistan, who had come down to the Peshawar District to spend the winter building mud walls and doing other hard jobs. As they cleared fire-breaks with their heavy adze-shaped hoes they took little account of risks. I saw one, who was hewing with all his might at a flaming beam, stand on the outer end of it to make it break the sooner. By the time the fire was got under control, towards dawn, the whole of the centre of the town had been burnt out. I was so pleased with the work of the Ghilzais that I rewarded them on the spot, giving the best man of them all two sovereigns; at which, covered with dust and soot, he embraced me.

About ten o'clock the Chief Commissioner, Sir George Roos-Keppel, and Bolton came out; and Bolton set to work to try the raider who had been captured. After the first witnesses had given evidence, Bolton told me to get a rope ready. R. K. (as he was known to all the world) confirmed the sentence of death and for the sake of public example I was ordered to get the man hanged in public. Evening was drawing on and R. K. and Bolton had to start back for Peshawar. This left me to finish off the job. The rope was made fast to a tree and, to provide a drop, office tables were set one on the top of another. I stood by with a revolver. The crowd, who had been clamorous for vengeance, felt sick and melted away.

Ethel Bolton, who had come out with Norman, made a good story of my part in the raid by describing me to friends as the man who had had to pay a Ghilzai £2 to kiss him.

What with callers, normal court and revenue work, visits to the scenes of raids, and the prospect of an examination in Pushtu, the hot weather of Charsadda was at least not tedious. Apart from an early morning ride, and a bathe in the river once or twice a day, I was normally at it from daylight until late at night. Under orders, I slept in the police station.

Charsadda had a splendid, long cold weather, and a muggy hot weather, with the temperature sometimes above 110° F. The lunar



## IN THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT

month of the fast of Ramzan occurred during the hot weather. This meant that the people of Charsadda, being strict Mahomedans, must abstain not only from food and tobacco, but from water also, from the hour of prayer before dawn until the moment, towards nine o'clock at night, when it was no longer possible to distinguish between a black thread and a white one and the mulla's call to evening prayer indicated that the day's fast was over. Fasting men were not at their best for court work towards the end of a long day. Finding this irritating, I decided that I would keep Ramzan, just as they did, during the last three or four days of the fast. The climax of discomfort, and perhaps of my irritability, seemed to come about three o'clock in the afternoon—after which I could look forward to the good cheer of the evening, the custom during Ramzan being to make up amply at night for the privations of the day. At twilight dishes would be laid out with vast slices of water melon. It looked like a great green football and was considered to be better even than draughts of sherbet or tea for restoring a dried-up body. The few days of discomfort produced their reward. The next year, when Ramzan was again near at hand, a deputation of the local Bar and khans represented that, much as my sympathetic action had been appreciated, it had been noticed that the sentences I passed during those few days had tended to be severe and it was hoped that I would not repeat the experiment. I said I would agree on condition that each day's list of cases should be cleared by one o'clock. This appealed to them. All combined to handle court work efficiently and there were frequent reports of cases being settled out of court. So all were able to pass the month of Ramzan in tolerable comfort.

Frank and Maud Anson invited me to spend ten days' leave with them at Nathia Gali, the N.W.F.P. hill station near the Kashmir border. For the first three days it was an almost uninterrupted cycle of feeding and sleeping, and feeding again and sleeping again, and knowing little else.

In Nowshera my chief assistant had been Kuli Khan, a man of Khattak stock, of big stout frame and big stout heart, and wise and cunning besides. He was then beginning to be recognized for the qualities which were to bring on him increasing responsibilities as the years went by. To match his weight ("Oh, my cursed belly," he would say as he heaved himself into the saddle) he had



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

two splendid Waziri mares, of about fifteen hands, with the distinctive curly ear-tips of the breed. To my joy Bolton moved him to the Charsadda sub-division. We took counsel together and decided to see for ourselves whether the khans of the villages in the Do-aba kept watch by night as they professed to do. Setting out with a few orderlies and police, on a dark night and without lanterns, we reached a large village where at point-blank range we were challenged. So far, so good. We went on to the village of a khan who had expectations of being appointed to an office of some small emolument and considerable prestige. As we passed through the outskirts of the village, not a dog barked. The khan's house and outbuildings were protected by a thick ten-foot wall and a stout barred door on heavy hinges. The strongest men with much effort hoisted Kuli and some others up and over the wall. On his charpoy over the gateway an armed sentry was snoring. Getting his knee into the man's stomach, Kuli asked him where his master was. "Di-le, Di-le"! (over there! over there!) said the man, who from that day was nicknamed Tiger. On the strength of the night's work we decided to advise Bolton that the vacant appointment should be conferred on the khan whose village had been on the watch.

Mohmand affairs were in the extremely skilled hands of Reg Griffith, who was a year or two my senior. All day and well into the night at Shabkadar he would sit in his room or on the ramparts of the fort, receiving reports on Mohmand affairs and keeping in touch with every section and sub-section of the tribe. When there was a border scrap on, his informants would leave the tribal firing line, telling their companions that it was time to be off, to make a report to Griffie. He would piece together shreds of information received from many sources, form his conclusions and, like a weather prophet, make his forecast. After a time we learned on his authority that another strong Mohmand attack was to be expected. Two Brigades moved out from Peshawar, one of the Commanders being General Dunsterville, the original of Kipling's 'Stalky'. Sir George Roos-Keppel also came, and a number of khans, who always wanted to be wherever R. K. was, turned up on ponies to watch. I was told off as a sort of marshal to help them see as much as possible, without getting in the way of troops. The morning passed without anything more than a few shots, but



## IN THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT

in the afternoon—by then most of my khans had had enough exercise—the firing became brisker. It was then that I saw R. K. walking along an exposed ridge, with bullets whistling and thudding around him, entirely at his ease. As the firing became heavier, he seemed to become younger and younger and more free from care. This was not ostentation. He had a strong streak of fatalism and, besides enjoying a fight, was I think convinced that nothing he might himself do would affect the date of his day of destiny.

Peshawar, Shabkadar, Matta and Abazai had recently been connected by a single telephone line, but its usefulness was apt to be affected by the delight which the occupants of the posts took in greeting one another and exchanging small bits of news. Pathan greetings are stereotyped and lengthy. 'Art thou well? Art thou very well? Art thou happy? May thou never be weary. May God bless thee. May thy shadow never grow less'—and many more. One afternoon at Shabkadar definite information came in that a Mohmand raider, who had a full record of blood on his hands, was sheltering in a village half way between Shabkadar and Matta. The obvious thing to do was to inform the Frontier Constabulary at Matta, who would turn out a party to catch him, and to phone the message to save time. The difficulty was to get through. We just could not break through the barrage of greetings. Finally I gave up the attempt, sent a message by road to Matta and started off on an old belt-driven motor-bike on which I was no expert. Just short of the village I heard that the man had been seen crossing the road, making for the Mohmand hills, so I turned off left up a side track, one hand grasping the handle bar and the other a revolver. The chase went on for a few hundred yards, but after that the going was too rough.

In the end the problem of Mohmand raids was tackled on Boer War lines by running a strong barbed wire entanglement, with live wires and block-houses, along the whole front from the Kabul river to the Swat river above Abazai. The lie of the land lent itself to this method because, while Mohmand territory was extensive, its front towards the Peshawar District was comparatively narrow. Much of the effectiveness of this system of defence was due to the facts that, even if raiders managed to cross the line, it was difficult for them to get back across it especially if they were loaded with loot, and that the Mohmand population depended on India for



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

some of the necessities of life, particularly salt. It was not easy for even the most pugnacious of tribesmen to put up for long with the taste of food that had no savour and with a nagging family.

The soldiers with whom I came in contact seemed to be amused at my somewhat solitary state as the one and only Britisher at my headquarters and started to call me 'Charsadda'. I was in fact beginning to feel really at home. For exercise I would often go out very early in the morning and ride about the country. Walking was a less simple matter because kind-hearted khans seeing me afoot would offer the loan of ponies. Near Charsadda the deeply indented high bank of the Swat river overlooked a wide flood-plain through which a stream meandered. Although I had little skill at golf, I devised a wonderful eighteen-hole course with holes laid out, dog-legged or otherwise, so as to be exacting to the expert, but kind to the duffer, and went on to make the course such that it could be played either way round. There were plenty of natural greens of sorts. The holes were dug the size of a bucket. Three miles farther down the river lived two old retired Risaldar Majors—the senior Indian officers of cavalry regiments—who were cousins, great friends, deadly rivals and kind hosts. At Abazai there was always company to be had—one or two regular officers and a canal officer whom we nick-named Bigglebai; and there was also a never-failing welcome from two Mians, descendants of the Prophet. Their sanctity enabled them to travel far in tribal territory, where other merchants could not venture, on their business in timber. From their garden which overlooked the river I had many good swims in cool rapid waters, fresh from the hills.

Amongst the institutions of the N.W.F.P. was a procedure under which, without bringing any particular criminal charge, a man could be required to cool his heels for a time in the 'Political lock-up'. Factional feelings which split every village into rival cliques were a curse. It seemed to me that a certain tall good-looking young landowner, very well off, was likely to ruin himself unless he could be cured of his habits of quarrelling with his neighbours and of not paying his land-revenue. So he was given a turn in the political lock-up and told, when he was let go after a few days, to take less interest in his big parent village and more in a fine property which he owned in the newly irrigated area a couple of miles away. But it was no good. He was soon up to his old



## IN THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT

tricks again and was given another spell in the lock-up. One evening, when he and I were having a chat through the bars, he asked how long he was to be kept there. I replied "For ever", unless he would promise to go and make his new property his real home; so he said he would really try. Many years later, when I was a guest at Government House, Peshawar, an orderly announced that Khan Bahadur so-and-so, whose name I did not recognize with the highly honourable prefix of Khan Bahadur, wanted to see me. In came my old friend. He said he had acted on my advice, had been a happy man ever since and had come to thank me.

Throughout the Districts of the N.W.F.P. two systems of law were in force—the normal criminal and civil laws of India, and the traditional tribal system of jirgas, or Councils of Elders. After a jirga had brought in its finding as to the facts of a case, and perhaps suggested a basis of reconciliation, I would pass sentence. As sub-divisional officer my powers extended under the jirga system to seven years' imprisonment, or fourteen years subject to confirmation by the Chief Commissioner. Under the regular law I could imprison up to seven years, subject to appeal, or commit for trial by the Court of Session at Peshawar. In awarding punishment in murder cases it was the custom to distinguish between dirty murders, e.g. of a child for its inheritance, and clean murders, e.g. if a husband killed his wife and a paramour caught in the act. Killing the paramour and sparing the wife was considered somewhat mean. Women were scarce and the woman's bride-price had perhaps been 1,000 rupees. At a time when the jails were over-full the order went forth that jail accommodation could be provided only for offenders sentenced to more than six months. On one occasion, when a particularly 'clean' murder had been committed, I sentenced the husband to six months' imprisonment—which under the new order meant that he left the court a free man. Proceedings had been under the regular law and the High Court expressed surprise. But the khans of Charsadda thought it fine. One went so far as to prophesy that for at least a week the young bucks and fair ladies of Charsadda would keep to their own beds.

I had taken kindly to Charsadda and was not at all well pleased when R. K.—or it may have been Bolton—decided that I should



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

move in to Peshawar as District Judge. I liked and respected many of the members of the Bar I had come across in Nowshera and Charsadda; but, unless you are born that way, it is not easy to acquire a taste for the formal processes of law. I daresay my betters were wise in their decision. Odd-shaped pegs may feel that they fit nicely into odd-shaped holes, but the N.W.F.P. was run, and very well run, on the principle of training beginners in a variety of work, and of giving them the chance of getting to know as many as possible of the leading men and of conditions throughout the Province, so that after a few years they could be employed wherever they were needed. In Peshawar I had chances of meeting practically all the more important Mahomedans and Hindus of the Province and of rubbing shoulders with military officers of all ranks in what was perhaps the most interesting military area in India.

The work that comes the way of a District Judge is apt to be plentiful rather than exciting and I do not remember that either for better or for worse I distinguished myself in any way. In non-criminal cases perhaps the most important things were to study the convenience of litigants and of their legal representatives by arranging a careful time-table, to keep the record methodically, and not to grudge time spent on the early stages of a case. If the parties could be got to agree as to the precise points in issue, and as to the party on which the burden of proof lay in regard to each issue, and to express their agreement in writing, a case could hardly go far wrong. 'Elementary, my dear Watson'——? Perhaps. But Peshawar was a place not of solicitors, but of barristers and pleaders, and of people who did not pause to think before they went to law. Often the clear statement of the issues would lead to a settlement out of court. In any event, the better the issues were drawn, the simpler would be the work of an appellate court. Members of the Bar had to earn their living but, provided they had had the opportunity of giving their clients a fair run for their money, they were often helpful in bringing about a settlement. It was in this way that I was relieved of the responsibility of making a decision in an interesting case in which a question of inheritance—which inevitably had to be traced on the female side—was being disputed between parties who had for generations been members of what is said to be the most ancient profession in the world.



## IN THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT

The highlight of that winter was work with the Peshawar Vale Hounds. In normal times the Master of the P.V.H. had no difficulty in enlisting as whips men who had done plenty of hunting, and perhaps of whipping in, with packs in other parts of India or at home. But now it was war time, soldiers were apt to be moved at very short notice, and Colonel Irvine offered me the job of joint second whip. The prospect was alarming, but the chance was too good to be missed. There were some twenty couple of old hounds and a draft of ten couple was due to arrive from England in a few days. In kennels there was old Khanai with two other men of sweeper class; but outside kennels, except for the occasional presence of Khanai on his small tat, all work was done by the Master and his whips and other helpers. The other whips were Blake of the R.A.M.C. and Turner. Finlay was Secretary and Woodall (who with his wife was well known with the South Dorset) was Field Master. When the new draft had arrived we were busy exercising almost every morning and evening. Morning exercise meant an early start. All of us had to be at work by a reasonable hour except on Sundays, and perhaps Thursdays for soldiers. On hunting days, owing to conditions of scent, the throw-off—it might be ten miles away and we had no hound van—would be timed for sunrise.

In Charsadda I had for a time kept two couple of hounds, cast off from the P.V.H. One thing they had taught me was that, if hounds go hunting out of control and don't want to come home, the best thing, having taken them out hungry, is to set off towards home yourself making appropriate sad sounds of departure. Knowing so little about hounds, I felt that I should never come to know one hound from another and to understand each individually, as the Master and Blake seemed to do by instinct. Gradually the knowledge came and with it hot arguments as to how each hound of the new entry was likely to shape when it came to the real thing.

My three horses included a nice strawberry roan mare of about fifteen hands, which I had bought for £40 at the horse fair at Peshawar. Luckily for them, I started the autumn with a good dose of sand-fly fever, which not only takes off weight at the time, but also—in this case at least—prevents it coming on again by the way it affects the palate, making any form of alcohol unpleasant



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

and tobacco a horror. Amongst arts that needed to be acquired was the handling of a whip so as to make the right noise and not hit the wrong hound or a horse. This seemed to be best practised by standing on a chair or half-way up a ladder.

Much of the country was plough land, apt to be very deep for two or three days after it had been irrigated or in wet weather. There were very few fences, but innumerable mud walls and irrigation ditches which varied from the quite small to the quite un-jumpable. A good Field would be 150 including some landowners—the more of them the better. We would start off from kennels before dawn and with the temperature below freezing point. On arriving at the meet we would see syces squatted, holding their horses' reins, in front of small fires of sticks or bits of sugar cane or millet. Their masters would be coming out in cars or more probably in light two-wheeled single pony tongas, perhaps cutting things fine after a Saturday night dance at the club. A few of the hardier would ride out, especially if the meet was not far from cantonments.

The coldest snap of the season came with the New Year. I remember it well because one day soon after sunrise hounds had been running fast for a mile when we found ourselves on the bank of a deep water-cut, too broad to jump. Hounds wouldn't cross it by themselves and, while the Master and Blake went right and left to find a ford or a bridge, I had to swim it to give hounds a lead. A mile on I came across a party of villagers who were boiling down cane juice into sugar in a great flat pan over a fire of waste cane. A pound or two of the sugar still hot from the pan soon warmed me and my mare. Another day, when a jack had gone to ground in a big drain near our best covert at Pirbala, the only way I could find to carry out my job of getting hounds home was to go in after them until, with only my feet left above ground, I could catch hold of the sterns of two hounds. We were lugged out by the heels, self, hounds, jack and all.

With the countryside coming under closer and closer cultivation and even old village sites, many of them full of the remains of Græco-Buddhist sculpture, being carried away piece-meal for use as manure, the best of the P.V.H. country east of Peshawar was becoming more and more short of natural coverts. The Master told me to see what could be done about it and, with the help of



## IN THE PESHAWAR DISTRICT

some of the landlords, several new coverts were established, free of cost or on a nominal rent. Amongst the landlords a man of influence was the Sheikh Sahib (who will be met again in Kabul). His home, Sheikhan, on the road to Kohat was famed for its long-grained rice. Even in those days land in the village was worth £250 an acre. Quick of mind, but distinctly large of body, he looked splendid in his canary-coloured P.V.H. waistcoat and brass buttons. Whether galloping across rough and muddy country really appealed to him was difficult to discover. His knowledge of the District was complete and more than once, when the meet had been arranged for a certain place, he told us afterwards with a smile that at the proper time he had turned up at another place of the same name, miles away in a different direction.

My favourite mare had the great merit of jumping fair-sized open canal cuts quietly from a standstill—very useful when watching the far side of a covert for a jack to break. What was particularly comforting about the P.V.H. for an indifferent rider was that in the course of an average morning's hunting a large proportion of the field would come to grief in one way or another; but I don't remember much serious damage. The most unpleasant fall I had was when my horse was scrambling out of a deep ditch. My elbow got driven into my stomach and it was not easy to stave off being very sick until we got back to kennels. Sometimes as we set out before dawn along a dusty road behind kennels we would see a buffalo awaiting its fate. By the time we came back he would have been converted into delicious hot fritters the size of a meat plate, well seasoned with onions.

As spring came on and the last of the sugar cane was being cut, we had some very good runs. Whatever may be the connection between 'stinkin' vilets' and lack of scent, the varied glories of peach, pear, plum, apple and pomegranate blossom seemed to have no bad effect.

For the hot weather the P.V.H. had kennels in the Hills near Murree at about 6,000 feet. Blake and Khanai took the pack off by train to Rawalpindi, the thirty-five miles on to Murree being by road. They started on a Saturday and early on Sunday I received an S.O.S. from Blake. He said he had had to go on, short of two couple which had broken away at Pindi station; and would I see to it? Searching for strayed hounds in a big cantonment full



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

of dog-lovers threatened to be a ticklish business. An obvious guess was to make a first cast in the direction of West Ridge where a British battalion from the Land of Tykes was quartered. Scent in the form of a breath of suspicion improved as Khanai's son and I neared their lines. The adjutant, who seemed to be almost too blandly ignorant of anything, said we might try our luck. After some time two men of the regiment volunteered the suggestion that, if we would stay put for half an hour, our promised reward might have its effect. It did.

When the hot weather was coming on Colonel Irvine went off to inspect medical work in the southern parts of the Province. A few miles beyond Kohat on a twisty bit of road his car ran into a boulder and overturned. The driver, pinned between the steering column and the back of his seat, escaped with a bruise or two, but Colonel Irvine, thrown forward clear of the car, hit his thigh on a large stone. By the time the broken bone had set one leg was some inches shorter than the other. But this did not put him off hunting. In January, 1919, hounds were running fast when the jack in full view made to cross a branch of the Kabul river. The water was deep and there was a strong current, but he with his hounds he must and would and, on his favourite mare, Hope, he plunged in after them. Hampered perhaps by his broken leg, he was swept away and, in spite of great efforts to save him, he was drowned. I think it was the death he might have chosen.

For what another great Master thought of Colonel Irvine, see 'The P.V.H.' by George Hurst, illustrated by 'Snaffles' and Tulloch. All good wishes to the P.V.H. when in 1965 they celebrate the centenary of the date when the 51st Regiment first brought foxhounds to Peshawar.

Early in the summer of 1917 I was given charge of the Mardan sub-division of the Peshawar District. The Guides invited me to mess with them, and I began to get to know a region through which Alexander the Great had passed on his invasion of India. I had been there only a few weeks when I was invited to visit Simla 'on approval', with a view to appointment as Assistant Private Secretary to the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford.



## IV

### *Assistant Private Secretary to the Viceroy*

1917-18

AFTER saying good-bye to Sir George Roos-Keppel at Nathia Gali, I went via the string of small military summer stations called the Galis (cols) to Murree, getting very wet on the way, and from there down to Rawalpindi. In a crowded train I had to sleep in my wet white summer suiting on a very dirty floor and I found in the morning that my topi had been taken by someone who had left behind a vast pith helmet, with thick beetling edges, a couple of sizes larger than mine. As the hill train into which I had changed at Kalka neared Simla the monsoon sky cleared and the sun came out. In my regrettable state I made for the Private Secretary's house, where I was to stay for a day or two, by a back way, and had almost reached it when I ran bang into the Viceroy and his family who were taking a stroll in the sun before lunch. Hoping they would think I was the man about the drains, I slunk by. Next day came my first introduction to Their Excellencies and a 'country house' sort of test in the form of lunch. What might be the crucial stage of the test—a cherry tart or something equally exacting—was impending when there was one of those silences which occur in even the best establishments. The hush was broken by a fellow-guest with the remark, "It is so nice to see you again, and how long do you expect to be here?" I believe I gasped out, "It all depends."

Lord Chelmsford, formerly Captain of the Oxford cricket XI and Fellow of All Souls, had come to India, soon after the beginning of the War, as a Captain in a territorial battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. The battalion, which was quartered at Ambala half way between Delhi and Simla, provided a company for guard duty at Jutogh, two miles west of Viceregal Lodge. John Maffey, of the I.C.S. and the Political, a Frontier officer with a fine reputation, was then Deputy Secretary in the Foreign



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Department. Both Lord Chelmsford and Maffey were keen tennis players. It did not take Lord Chelmsford long to appreciate Maffey's value and, when the Viceroyalty was offered him in succession to Lord Hardinge, he invited Maffey to be his Private Secretary.

The Viceregal staff was twofold. For ceremonial, domestic and social matters, and arrangements for the extensive tours on which a Viceroy spent much of his time, the Viceroy's right-hand man was the Military Secretary under whom were the Comptroller of the Household and the A.D.C.s. The Private Secretary (P.S.V.), who had under him the Assistant Private Secretary (A.P.S.V.) and a Registrar and a small office staff, was concerned with all the rest of the work that a Viceroy has to do. Normally every state paper that reached a Viceroy's hands came up to him through the P.S.V., and all papers that the Viceroy had seen were returned to the Department concerned through the P.S.V. The P.S.V. attended meetings of the Viceroy's Executive Council, fixed the Viceroy's interviews, did his best to economize the Viceroy's time, and helped, without lessening the closeness of contact between the Viceroy and Members of the Executive Council and Secretaries to Government and visiting Governors and others, to make the Viceroy's views clear to them and their views clear to the Viceroy. He extended a helping, but not usurping, hand wherever he could. He needed to have a flair for deciding which were the papers out of the many submitted which his Chief must see and which were those on which he could note 'H.E. approves', without worrying the Viceroy. In short his job was to take up what weight he could without throwing his own weight about. Most important perhaps of all, the P.S.V. was apt to be the one man with whom the Viceroy could be on terms of entire intimacy. I found that my job as A.P.S.V. was not to assist in advising Lord Chelmsford but to lend the P.S.V. a hand as well as I could.

I had arrived at a busy time. Turkey was at war with us; Russia had collapsed; the Germans seemed to be on the point of over-running the Middle East; and there was reason to believe that they were planning for 1919 a major coup in and via Afghanistan. India's prompt and sustained war effort must have been one of Germany's greatest disappointments. In England the Lloyd George coalition government was in power. It may be a fact that some years after



## ASSISTANT PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICEROY

the war L. G. said that now for the first time he realized that there was a difference between eye-ran (Iran) and eye-rack (Iraq), but he had a big mind and knew where to delegate authority and he had a sense of the moment. Installed as A.P.S.V., I was in a position to observe that a lively correspondence was taking place between Lord Chelmsford and the Secretary of State for India (my impression is that at least half of the initiative was from the Indian end) with a view to encouraging India, which had digested the Morley-Minto reforms, to advance farther in the direction of self-government. The Viceroy suggested that the Secretary of State should visit India during the coming cold weather. When Mr. Austen Chamberlain resigned office on account of the muddled campaign in Mesopotamia, it fell to Mr. Edwin Montagu, his successor at the India Office, to accept the invitation.

Oh, that damnable word 'reforms'. Unlike Mercy, it discredits and besmirches the attitude both of those who give and of those who take. Is it a 'reform' when after a minority a man assumes control of what had been held in trust for him? For a hundred years thoughtful men had foreseen, and worked for, Home Rule for India.

When in the autumn we went down to Delhi we saw that the broad roads of Viceregal Lodge, where the King and Queen had stayed at the time of the Durbar, were lined with tents. To the right, looking down towards the Durbar polo grounds, were two streets of tents, with brick fireplaces in the sitting-rooms, for Mr. Montagu and his staff and for the Governors and others who would be invited from time to time to give counsel. To the left towards the Ridge were the living tents and offices of the Viceroy's staff. The Private and Military Secretaries, being married, lived one or two hundred yards away in houses which, having a few years before been considered not too comfortable by young Army officers, were now at a premium and the envy of many. The tents seemed to suit Mr. Montagu and his staff excellently well. They were amply large for small conferences and lunch or dinner parties without the formality and publicity incidental to entering Viceregal Lodge and, as many Indian visitors found, Mr. Montagu was at his disarming best as a host on an intimate occasion. He seemed to me to be quite devoid of any racial consciousness.

Men reveal their characters in the way they tackle their work.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

A Viceroy's function is to direct policy and exercise influence and to keep his ear to the ground by being accessible. This meant that, within a few minutes of being engaged with his Executive Council or with a leader of Indian opinion in the discussion of some difficult and vital matter, he must be prepared to take on a large luncheon or dinner party, or go to watch a polo match, as if he had not a care in the world. Each day's engagements had to be streamlined and this depended on punctuality in all things. One day not long after I joined the Viceroy's staff I innocently asked the senior A.D.C. what happened if I was late for a meal. His prompt reply was, "You aren't." What had been obedience to a rule soon became a habit.

Maffey was a grand man to work for. He expected you to do all that you could as well as you could, but he was content with that. He was a hard, brilliant and fast worker, worked when he worked and played when he played, and obviously thought that all work and no play would do nothing to prevent an A.P.S.V. being a dull boy. He had a Sunday habit which suited me down to the ground, especially in Delhi. His general rule was that at all times of the day including Sunday either he or the A.P.S.V. must be on the spot, available for duty. I gradually accumulated five polo ponies of sorts and found that they went best for me at polo if they had occasional long spells of slow work out in the country. Maffey's idea of a good Sunday morning was what in India was called a Europe morning—late abed and then the combination of breakfast and lunch called 'brunch'. This meant that I could be out from as early as I liked until midday.

Before the war Delhi had been well known for its pigsticking. There was the story of a Deputy Commissioner who in course of time became famous for his rural development and uplift work. Finding Delhi and Gurgaon and their pigsticking much to his taste and not much minding their long hot weather, he was credited with having more than once carefully planned to commit some error which resulted in his being sentenced to a further term of duty in areas which were not to everybody's taste.

General Wardrop's 'Modern Pig-Sticking' states that in 1912 the Delhi Tent Club accounted for 385 pig. It seemed a pity that the Tent Club should not be kept going somehow, and bad luck too for Baloo, the old Tent Club shikari. So I would arrange to



meet Baloo somewhere out by the banks of the Jumna, ready to have a stretch of tamarisk or long grass or a field of crops beaten as soon as it was light enough to see to ride. Results in the matter of the number of pig killed were not great, but at least it kept Baloo and his men employed and I got to know something of the habits of pig. A big boar has a way of breaking far ahead of the line of beaters, leaving his wives and children to look after themselves. It was odd to read correspondence in *The Times* some little time ago about a success achieved in breeding pigs with striped backs. That is what every wild Indian piglet has. The stripes fade out as he grows up.

In normal times the great event of the Indian pigsticking season, which begins in the winter and improves as the hot weather is coming on and cover becomes less thick, was the Kadir Cup. In competition pigsticking men race to get first spear. The pig are beaten into the open by a line of elephants and of men on horses and on foot. On sighting a 'rideable' pig (of 27 inches or more at the withers), the umpire gives the word 'go' to a heat of three or four spears and the first man who can show blood or fat on his spear is the winner. The going is usually blind or rough and in riverside country there are apt to be boggy patches and quick-sands. Horses are ridden full out and on a loose rein. On less formal occasions men have to make up their own minds as to what is a rideable pig. In pigsticking language an undersized pig if he is stuck, or one that is stuck abaft of midships, is a guinea pig, because the man who has committed the error, and some reckon it a crime, is fined a guinea.

When there are only one or two spears out 'the object of the exercise' is to bag the pig somehow. I remember a good morning of that kind with Paddy Wilson by the Horse-shoe Jheel—a shallow lake—three or four miles north of Delhi. Another good occasion was when, under the walls of the Emperor Humayun's tomb on the other side of Delhi, a gallant little Waler (Australian horse) I had recently bought, which was out pigsticking for the first time, got cut in the stifle by a biggish boar's tushes and a few minutes later was calmly eating handfuls of bloody stalks of green barley off the dead pig's warm body. Not all horses take to the game so readily and some never.

Whatever may have been the political pros and cons of moving



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

the capital to Delhi, it was a splendid place in those days for sport. From my bed in the early morning I could hear black and grey partridge calling, the Ridge between Viceregal Lodge and the City was full of hares, there were wild pig within a mile, and the country all round teemed with game—blackbuck, chinkara, duck, teal, snipe, partridge, peacock, geese, quail, and a lot more. There was also the Delhi Hunt. One day when we had nearly finished crossing the Jumna—it feeds a canal and is shallow in the cold weather—I was taken to task by General Monro, the C.-in-C., for assaulting one of the Viceroy's daughters with my hunting crop. I had seen her horse pawing the water as a preliminary to a refreshing roll.

With the approach of the New Year we became busy with preparations for publishing the New Year's Honours List. For this the P.S.V. was responsible. It was to be a very big affair, in keeping with India's war effort. Even in my earlier days in Simla before the war there had been an encore verse in a well-remembered Simla A.D.C. performance of *The Country Girl* which alleged that 'the K.C.I.E.s, they grow on the trees in the beautiful valley of Bhong', but now all that was going to be put in the shade. There were Ruling Princes who were to be granted some exaltation of title, or promotion in honorary military rank, or more guns, personal or hereditary, in their salutes; for them and for others there would be admissions to, or promotions in, the various Orders of the Bath, the Star of India, the Indian Empire, and the recently founded Order of the British Empire; of simple Knight-hoods there would be not a few, and of the special Indian titles of dignity such as Rai Bahadur for Hindus and Khan Bahadur for Mahomedans still more. There were some individuals who would be granted two or even three kinds of recognition, and it would be fitting that many of those honoured should receive letters or telegrams of congratulation from the Viceroy. In order that there might be no mistake I set the P.S.V.'s office to work on a very large chart. Across the top of it were typed all the Honours to be granted—military rank, guns, G.C.S.I., C.S.I., and so forth, and down the left-hand side the names of the recipients. From this chart I wrote or dictated letter after letter and telegram after telegram. On New Year's Eve we sent to the telegraph office and to the news agencies a printed list, secret until midnight, in which



## ASSISTANT PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICEROY

the names were grouped under bold headings G.C.I.E., K.C.I.E., C.I.E., and so forth. Alas! About breakfast time on New Year's Day I heard that Maffey wanted me urgently in his tent. In those days it was the practice for many officials to receive a full service of news telegrams; and in the telegrams as they received them in Delhi all the C.I.E.s had appeared as K.C.I.E.s. Already the wives of men who hitherto had been innocent of any letters after their names were being congratulated on being Lady So and So. Telephones were ringing and friends were dashing round. I had issued the list. What about it? Enquiry showed that something had gone wrong in the telegraph office. By lunch-time the commotion had died down and the world was still turning much as usual in its course round the sun.

One of the last events of that Delhi season, after Mr. Montagu and his staff had left to return to England, was a junior polo tournament forty miles away at Meerut. It was a nerve-racking affair for a member of the Viceroy's Staff team with a well-justified handicap of 0. When soon after that we started again to play on the Annandale ground at Simla I found that both rider and ponies took much less long to acclimatize to height than had been the case the year before when we were new to it.

In February Canon Allnutt, head of the S.P.G. and Cambridge Mission to Delhi, died; and I was permitted to represent the Viceroy at his funeral. Everybody in Delhi City knew and respected him and many loved him. He more than any other single man was the father of modern education in Delhi and in large measure it was thanks to St. Stephen's College that, after the transfer of the capital, Delhi University, which incorporated the College, was destined to get off to a good start. I remember him as a long, lean, sallow man, with projecting cheek bones and a sparse, Chinesey, grey-white, pointed beard, in a rusty black cassock well sprinkled with cheroot ash, quick to see the funny side of things. Many of the Christians in and around Delhi were of the lowest social orders and very poor. In the St. Stephen's community it was not the custom to spend on ceremonies after death money which was needed for the care of the living. The burial ground in general use for Indian Christians of the poorer classes was a disused brick field in a depression by the railway track. To this resting-place the body of Canon Allnutt, wrapped in a cheap



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

white cloth and placed on a light wooden stretcher, was borne by young men of his congregation. Thousands of men and women of every class and of every religion followed on foot through the dust. I felt sure Canon Allnutt would not have resented the fact that under my decently mournful clothes I was wearing riding breeches so as not to miss an evening meet of the Delhi Hounds.

Not long after we had moved back to Simla in the spring the Viceroy went down to Delhi again for an all-party conference on war effort. A resolution had been drafted to the effect that India stood for a maximum contribution both of manpower and of munitions. On the Saturday the Viceroy opened the proceedings with a good business-like speech. He was not by nature a very ready or emotional speaker. During the week-end C. F. Andrews—well known first as a Cambridge Don, then as a live wire in the Cambridge Mission at Delhi, and latterly as a friend of Mr. Gandhi,—kept popping in and out of Viceregal Lodge. Early on the Monday the Viceroy, accompanied by his staff, went to re-open the proceedings. He made a short speech and we all thought that many more speeches would follow, when in the middle of the assembly a lean wiry figure, very simply dressed in white, was seen to rise and a still quiet voice said, first in Hindi and then in English, "This proposal has my full and unqualified support." The speaker was Mr. Gandhi. There was a murmur of assent and a general feeling that, Mr. Gandhi having said so much in so few words, there was no occasion for other members of the conference to say anything. Lord Chelmsford, who was apparently taken by surprise, rose and, by the common consent of many who knew him well, made the best, and best-received, speech of the whole of his term as Viceroy. He put the resolution, which was carried unanimously, and left the assembly. I was following when the head shorthand reporter came and asked me to stay behind to help him. He said that he and two other men of his team had taken down the speech, but they could not make head or tail of it. From the three transcripts I patched together as connected a speech as I could and, to be on the safe side, took it back to Viceregal Lodge, where Maffey told me to take it to Lord Chelmsford. He read it carefully, said we had had an exciting and tiring morning, and added that he would be much obliged if nevertheless I would go back to the council chamber to convey to the shorthand staff



his thanks for an accurate and exact transcription of every word he had said. So much for carefully prepared speeches and for any idea that what sounds best is apt to read best and vice versa.

We went back well content to Simla. One of my next jobs was to draft a speech for the Viceroy to deliver in the course of a visit to Baluchistan. Maffey said he was sorry to hurry me, but he must have it within an hour or two. I did what I could in the time and took it in to Maffey who said he now found that next morning would have been soon enough. That sounded better, so I took back the draft and by the next day had produced something that I thought must at any rate be some degrees less bad than my first hurried effort. Maffey looked at it, gave a groan, said it might be a fair essay, but was quite useless as a speech, and asked whether I could retrieve the first draft from the waste-paper basket. In due course the speech was delivered as first drafted. It proved to be effective to the extent of paining some of its hearers who did not like being told to put more effort into reconverting pruning hooks into spears.

The Viceroy found long spells of the height of Simla trying, and from time to time Maffey decoyed him away to spend a day or two fishing for mahseer in the Giri below Simla. It was an old haunt of mine and perhaps I had put Maffey onto it. It was heavyish water, usually warm enough to wade in shorts, and just crossable in places if you lunged along on your heels at an acute angle down stream. It was sometimes fishable with a fly but, if the water was at all thick, the fish were apt to come better to a small red spoon. One week-end, when they were away on the Giri, a file came to the P.S.V.'s office with a blue slip marked 'Immediate'. The question was whether a party of *muhajirin*—men who undertake a journey in the cause of religion, or Haj—should be prevented by force from crossing the frontier from India into Afghanistan. The Hindustani Fanatics who lived in a tangle of mountains on the upper waters of the Indus beyond the Mardan border and had never been brought under control were partly responsible for the project. On looking through the file it appeared to me that the matter had been well thrashed out and that little more than formal approval, allowing the Muhajirs to find their own way to probable disillusionment, was being sought; so I wrote 'H. E. approves'. But I lacked Maffey's sure touch and judgment and when



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

he returned on the Monday I found—to put the matter in the most favourable light—that I had relieved His Excellency of the labour of having to make a difficult decision. Perhaps all was for the best. It was not long before the Muhajirs and their sympathizers came to realize that Afghanistan was not all that had been hoped for.

More than once Maffey asked me how I liked the A.P.S.V. job. I said, very much, as long as he was happy, but that he knew that ever since the war started I had been wanting to get off on something more like active service. This may have been unreasonable of me, but many others felt the same. Maffey said (it was, perhaps, politeness on his part) that he would not stand in my way. A few days later I received orders to proceed to East Persia to understudy, and shortly to relieve, Colonel Prideaux, Consul for Seistan.



## V

### *East Persia*

1918-21

DURING the nineteenth century the Russians in Central Asia and the British in India had extended their territories up to the present frontiers of Persia and Afghanistan. In order to check a further Russian advance towards India, the British wanted Persia and Afghanistan to be strong. Russia, who wanted access to the Persian Gulf and possibly had designs on India, preferred that they should be weak.

After the death of Nasir ud Din Shah in 1907 the Persian government, faced with democratic demands, came near to collapse.

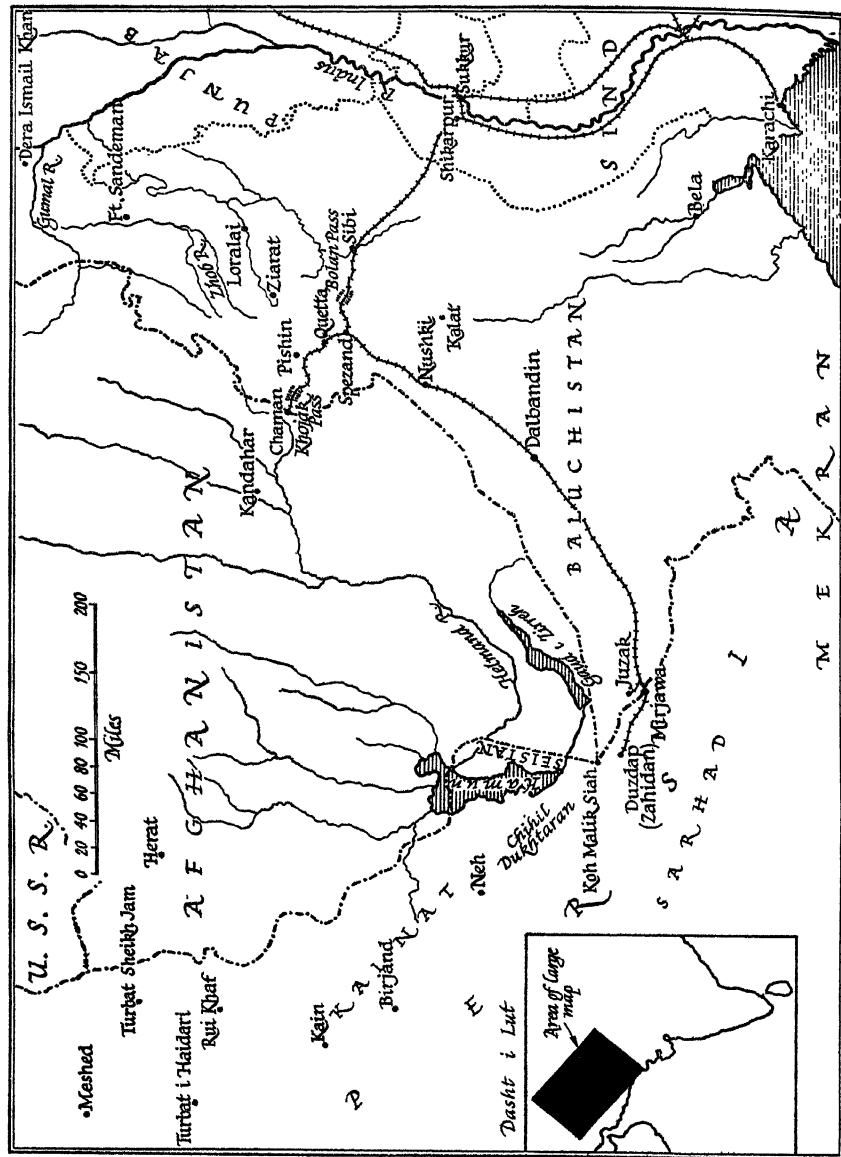
The Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, in so far as it related to Persia, assigned to Russia a large sphere of influence in the north and the north-west and to Britain a small sphere of influence in the south-east. The rest of Persia was to be a neutral sphere. There was a good deal to be said in favour of this practical solution of a difficult problem; but the bold marking of the spheres on the map suggested to Persian minds the idea that Persia had been partitioned.

Outside the few important towns, most of the inhabitants of the southern regions of the neutral zone were nomadic tribesmen over whom the Persian government had little control. In them Germany saw a fine opportunity. She employed first-rate men in her consulates, provided them with ample money, and set them to work to incite the tribesmen to lawlessness. Her objects were to wreck British influence in southern Persia and to send agents across Persia to stir up trouble in Afghanistan and on the Indian frontier.

The German challenge was met. In the south and south-west after much effort order was restored, largely by means of a local force, the South Persia Rifles, raised and directed by Sir Percy Sykes and a few British officers. In the Sarhad ('Frontier') region where Baluchistan and Persia meet, General Dyer, with a few



# IV E. PERSIA & BALUCHISTAN





## EAST PERSIA

regular troops and a locally recruited corps of Persian Baluch Levies, brought about results which are described in his 'The Raiders of the Sarhad'.

For the actual business of preventing German agents from reaching Afghanistan, a thin cordon of troops, increasingly supplemented by local Levies, was drawn northwards from the Sarhad 150 miles across desert country to Neh, and on, 120 miles through better country to Birjand. From Birjand 300 miles northward to Meshed and on another 100 miles to the Russian frontier, a cordon was maintained by the Russians.

Turkey was in the war on the German side. During the early years of the war the Turks, with Russian armies on their flank, were unable to make a serious advance into Persia. But in 1917 the Tsar abdicated and Russia went out of the war. The way into Persia was now open to the Germans and Turks. There appeared also to be a prospect that the Bolsheviki, who were obtaining the upper hand in Russia, might join in with them. General Dunsterville was sent to north-west Persia with instructions to delay an enemy advance; and Major General Wilfrid Malleon was sent to Meshed to study the situation and to plan resistance on a major scale.

To meet requirements in the Sarhad and in the direction of Birjand and Meshed, a single line of railway had gradually been extended from Nushki, 80 miles south-west of Quetta, across desert country, first for 150 miles to Dalbandin and then for another 150 miles to Juzak near the Persian border. In the summer of 1918 another 60 miles was being built, to the Persian border near Mirjawa and on, through Persian territory, to Duzdap (shown on modern maps as Zahidan), 30 miles south of where India, Afghanistan and Persia meet at Koh Malik Siah. A further extension to Neh had been surveyed.

I made contact with the authorities in Quetta and then proceeded on my journey. About midday on the first day out from Nushki the train was held up at a station. This consisted of little more than two parallel lines of rails, two signal posts, a signal box and a dug-out built of old sleepers. The roof of the dug-out showed three feet above the level of the surrounding desert. A



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

cheery voice hailed me and a young railway officer insisted that I must come in and see his wife and have a drink and take pot luck at lunch. The beer was more than warm, but the curry was hot and good. My hostess said she was sorry she could not join us at lunch. Her daily bout of malaria was just about to come on and she must get back into bed. As there was only one room in the dug-out, the dining-room was also of course her bedroom.

From my host I heard something of the problems which arise when a railway is being built across a desert. The destination having been determined, search is made for an alignment with a sufficient number of good watering points. The alignment must be as short as possible, in order that there may be as little expenditure as possible on rails and sleepers and other materials; it must involve as little cutting and embankment as possible, in order that construction may be rapid; it must demand as few culverts and bridges as possible and yet be safe from wash-outs; it should rise and fall as little as may be; and the maximum or 'ruling' gradient (steep curves entered into the calculation of gradient) must be determined at an early stage, because the number of wagons an engine can haul is determined by the steepest pitch on any part of the line. There might also be problems of defence and many other matters to consider. Very often the big decisions had to be made in a hurry. It was a saying amongst railway men that no perfect alignment had ever yet been planned. And, after a railway had been completed, fresh circumstances and needs were sure to arise. In the case of the Nushki-Duzdap extension, the one problem that had not needed consideration was how to link up important centres of population. There were none.

At rail-head beyond Juzak I watched construction gangs at work. A few marks on the surface of the desert showed the alignment. The first thing was to build arches and culverts—as few as possible for the time being—and to produce a level bed. Then there came an odd-looking train. In front were two very long bogie trucks loaded with rails; then the engine; and then wagons loaded with sleepers, chairs, spikes and wedges. The materials were thrown down on to the ground and the empty train was backed to the nearest siding, to make room for another loaded train.

Meanwhile, a gang of men was bringing up the sleepers and chairs and spikes and wedges; another was spacing them; another



aligning them; and so on. Nobody seemed to be working very hard, nobody tried to do more than one small job, and very few orders were being given. Then the rails, each of which appeared to have fallen within a few feet of where it was needed, were lifted on to the sleepers by gangs of men in pairs, with yokes on their shoulders. Other gangs came and performed their particular small tasks. And soon a section of line, which half an hour before had been the load of the first train I had watched, was ready for the next train to pass over it. I was told that, a few months earlier, it had taken the whole of a long working day to lay a third of a mile of track. Now a mile and a quarter was being completed by soon after midday.

From temporary rail-head at Juzak a rough motor track led over the barren rocky plain towards Koh Malik Siah. Mile after mile both sides of the track were littered with the bodies of dead camels in various stages of decay. Dead camels have a stale sweet smell which is all their own and it was difficult to hold breath long enough to take in gulps of clean hot air. The glare was intense. Pools of blue mirage suggested lakes of still water where actually there was none for many miles.

Koh Malik Siah, which was marked prominently on the map, proved to be nothing more than a collection of half a dozen mud buildings, a spring and a small pool of drinkable water and two or three gnarled trees. North of Koh Malik Siah the saw-toothed summits of the range of the Forty Virgins—the Chihil Dukhtaran—looked down eastwards over the Seistan plain and westwards over the desert which stretched towards Kirman.

Seistan, the home of Sohrab and Rustum and the granary of south-eastern Persia and south-western Afghanistan, is the Delta formed by the Helmand and other rivers where they flow into a great inland lake, the Hamun of Seistan. As we passed villages of the oasis and neared the town, we were beset by beggars, men, women and children. To provide for this part of the usual routine of arrival or departure, the driver of my car produced a small sackful of copper coins.

Colonel Prideaux, who was spending the summer in Birjand, had invited me to occupy the Consulate house in Seistan. This was a long single-storied building. It had immensely thick walls made of large flat mud bricks. After the Persian manner, the ceilings were



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

domed and the walls and ceilings were finished off with a sort of plaster of Paris made from nodules found on the shores of the Hamun. The chief glory of the Consulate was an ambassadorial coat of arms. This, and the teak windows and doors, had been imported on camels all the way from Nushki by the first of the British Consuls for Seistan. When it was found that the arms were such as no other consulate had ever borne, Government decided that they might be retained on condition that he met the extra cost.

Next door to the Consulate lived Davis Heron, the Consulate Doctor, who was also Vice-Consul, and next to him Murray, the Manager of the local branch of the Imperial Bank of Persia—later known as the Imperial Bank of Iran. Other Britishers in the place included three officers of the Seistan Levy Corps.

It was the season of the hundred and twenty days' wind, the curse and blessing of Seistan. When the southerly monsoon rains break in India, a northerly current of air sets in along the Seistan-Afghan frontier. In direction it is constant as the needle of a compass. It is a curse because, blowing for three or four days and nights on end at a speed of forty to fifty miles an hour, it fills the lungs and every corner with sand and dust. It is a blessing because it lowers the temperature which may be 120° F. It also forces cool air through screens of camel thorn piled in northern windows or doorways and sprinkled with water.

East Persia was governed, under the Shah and his Ministers in Teheran, by a Governor General who lived at Meshed. Nominally under him, but practically independent, was the Governor of the sub-province of Seistan and the Kainat who lived at Birjand. The Seistan district was in charge of a Deputy Governor named Samsam ud Dowleh who was a relation of the Governor. Also at the headquarters of every Consulate General and Consulate there was a representative of the Persian Ministry of Foreign Affairs who bore the title of Karguzar. In theory he was the authority with whom a Consul should transact business but, especially perhaps under war conditions, most of the business of the British Consul in Seistan tended to be with the Governor or Deputy Governor.

I called on Samsam ud Dowleh and was entertained with the customary two cups of tea and one of sweet strong black coffee. He was a man of middle age, short, very fat, quick-eyed, wheezy



## EAST PERSIA

and continually on the verge of a laugh which exploded from time to time into a loud guffaw. But I was to find that he was a man of authority.

Prideaux told me to come to stay with him at Birjand. That year the Hamun was high and the crossing would take several hours. In the evening Davis Heron saw me off from the eastern shore. Square miles of reeds of many kinds grow in the Hamun. The reeds having been cut and dried and tied in cigar-shaped bundles, anything from half a dozen to a hundred of these bundles are bound together to form sharp-ended punts. My bed was spread on one of the smaller punts. I went to sleep, thinking of the infant Moses in his boat of bulrushes. When I woke up, dawn was beginning to break and we were nearing the western shore.

I have never seen glories of the dawn and sunrise to match those of the barren lands of East Persia.

Thirty miles from the Hamun we passed an oasis with a spring of brackish water and a few date trees. Sixty miles farther on, we joined the route from Koh Malik Siah and Neh towards Birjand and Meshed. Beyond us, on the other side of a range of hills, lay the desert of the Dasht i Lut. This, like the rotten centre of a pear which has been kept too long, occupies a great part of the heart of Persia. Compared with it, the deserts which lie between Nushki and Neh can hardly be reckoned as deserts.

We had now entered the borders of the Kainat. From Seistan which is 1,700 feet above sea-level we had risen imperceptibly to 5,000 feet and here we were in an area with a rainfall of several inches a year. By the standards of East Persia and of camels, there was good grazing everywhere and, while by itself the rainfall was seldom sufficient to raise crops, it was enough, after it had seeped into the porous soil, to feed the underground systems of kanats on which cultivation is chiefly dependent in Persia. From Neh northwards there were frequent villages, each set amongst orchards surrounded by mud walls. Wheat and barley were ripening in the fields. Several of the villages were famed for their rugs and carpets. To a connoisseur, the carpets of different villages are no less distinguishable than the wines of different chateaux.

At Birjand Colonel Prideaux had established himself in a Kelata—a suburban house in a garden—three miles from the town. Here he and Mrs. Prideaux offered constant hospitality to all comers.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

No longer young nor of slight figure, his chief ostensible interests were the genealogy of his family, horses, bridge and anything with a bit of a gamble in it. Having never served with the Government of India, he appeared to be convinced that whatever the Government of India said must of necessity be right—a compliment which of course Government returned with interest. A fine organizer, he was always ready to delegate authority and to let a man get on with his job. His wide, sensitive mouth was more ready to smile and to joke than to discuss abstruse matters, but on occasion it could become firm and hard. He made a show of knowing much less Persian than he really knew. He had had a hard war, was now needing leave and was more than ripe for promotion. The military commander, Brigadier Dale, was engaged in converting a spy-catching cordon of troops supplemented by local Levies into a line of communications between the Indian frontier and Meshed. Terence Brenan was Vice-Consul.

On the way from rail-head to Seistan I had spent a night in the open by a small puddle of water and now, some twelve days later, I had my first attack of malaria. To get fit after it, I took a small tent up to the top of the range of hills which overlooks Birjand and, in the course of long early morning walks, came to love it. The hot dry spicy air had a sting which I can still feel. A few days later, at the suggestion of Prideaux and at the invitation of Colonel Grey, Consul General for Khorasan, I started off for Meshed. At Kain, seventy miles north of Birjand, I was to meet Kreyer of the 8th Cavalry. On the way I passed through long low beds of crocus from the flowers of which saffron, a principal export of the Kainat, is made.

As Kreyer and I were riding along one day we came to an underground cistern with a brick dome over it, perhaps half the size of the dome of St. Paul's. Such cisterns, or *hauzes* as they are called, are filled by the surface run-off after a fall of rain and often are crawling with little pink worms. But thirsty men are not apt to be particular. Our Levy escort dismounted and gave their horses and rifles to local urchins to hold. Then they went down into the *hauz* to drink and to fill the canvas pitcher-shaped chagals which they carried under their ponies' bellies. The oozing of the water through the canvas kept it cool. Having in mind the customs and risks of the North-West Frontier, I was scandalized. But Kreyer



## EAST PERSIA

explained gently that, if a man serving in the Levy Corps did not know who could be trusted and who could not, he would be no Levy and useless.

Some of us had new and squeaky saddles recently issued from ordnance store. Kreyer told me that one day, as a very young officer, he had congratulated a senior Indian officer on his nice shiny new saddle. The officer replied that he had had it throughout his service and that it looked new because he had always dressed it with raw goat fat. So when we halted at a village that evening we bought two goats, gave our escort the meat, and squelched along for a day or two on fatty saddles. The effect on the saddles was excellent and lasting.

Eighty miles south of Meshed we spent two days at Turbat i Haidari, and there we ran into Beery Bill (A. de C. Williams of Balliol and the I.C.S., now a war-time soldier). He had reached Turbat with a convoy of Ford vans, but had only a few gallons of petrol left. So he decided to see whether he could be the first to get a car through from Turbat to Meshed. We found him busy at work, cutting down some young poplar trees which he thought might come in useful as levers in bad places.

The journey on to Meshed was through hilly country. We met the heavy wagons of the country called fourgons. They were drawn by four strong stallions abreast and carried a ton or more. Their drivers, and the muleteers of Persia who carry big loads for long distances at a fast pace, seemed to have a horror of feeding their animals during the day, but they would water them whenever they had the chance. The fourgon men were in the habit of giving their animals up to twenty-five pounds of straight barley in a single feed at night. I have never seen a Persian muleteer think of himself at the end of a day's march until he had taken off the animals' saddles—they were about a foot thick and were padded with chopped straw—gone over his animals with a curry-comb and replaced the saddles, if necessary, for warmth. Horses and mules were shod with a very thin plate which almost entirely covered the frog. It was a dry country and the going was often very stony.

At a turn of the road we came to a little shrine on a bluff. There below us, three miles off, was the great turquoise dome of the Shrine of Imam Reza. To Shiah, Meshed, and Kerbela in Iraq,



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

are as sacred as Mecca and Medina. It was not my only visit to Meshed, but it is the only time that I travelled on horseback and it is that journey and that first sight of the shrine that remain fresh in memory.

We were made welcome by Colonel Grey. With more than one Degree of Honour to his credit, Grey was highly proficient in Persian and other oriental languages. Like Prideaux, he was a man of unbounded hospitality. The Consulate General was an attractive house, of which the chief feature was a large central hall. A staircase led to a gallery which ran round the hall on three sides and gave access to several good bedrooms. The sanitation was primitive and the baths were large shallow circular trays, filled and emptied by hand.

I called on General Malleeson. He wasted no time and was soon pressing me to say what opinion I, an unprejudiced new-comer, had formed as to the ability of the line of communications in its present state to place a considerable force in north-east Persia and to maintain it. From Brigadier Dale he had received reports, which he feared might be optimistic, as to the position between rail-head and Turbat i Haidari; but he had also just learned from him that, after investigation by Engineers, it had been found that it would not be possible to construct a motor road between Turbat and Meshed.

I replied that, to judge from what I had seen and been told, Dale had done wonders in the way of making bricks with extremely little straw; but that the fact that the l. of c. was in very, very much better order than it had been a few months before had perhaps blinded him to the fact that it was still entirely inadequate to maintain a considerable force. Indeed, before taking over from Prideaux as Dale's colleague, I felt that the Government of India ought to be informed of the position as I saw it. If they thought I was wrong, they might prefer to send someone else in my place to relieve Prideaux. I had already drafted a telegram on the subject, but had wanted to check its contents against his and Grey's knowledge before I sent it off. Or perhaps, I suggested, General Malleeson might prefer to send a report on similar lines himself. To this he replied, after reading the draft, that it was on all fours with what he had himself already reported more than once and that I ought certainly to send the telegram off without delay.



## EAST PERSIA

As we were discussing the road between Turbat and Meshed, an orderly entered, saluted and announced a visitor. Enter Beery Bill. Malleson asked where he hailed from, and B. B. said, "Turbat, sir." "With permission?" "No, sir." "In how many days?" "Two and a half, sir." "You must have worked your pony hard." "I came in a Ford van, sir." After that I thought I had better leave them to it.

In Meshed I had a game or two of polo. The ground was stony and rough and there was a special local rule as to what was to be done if the ball was lying unplayable in one of the many holes on the ground. A pleasant recollection is of the fruit, and especially the grapes, which grow to perfection under the influence of cold snowy winters and hot dry summers. There were also some tolerable local wines. I bought two young Turkoman stallions. They stood about 15.1 and cost £60 each.

I decided to return to Birjand via Turbat Sheikh Jam, which lies close to the Afghan frontier opposite Herat. My escort began to fall ill and at Turbat Sheikh Jam I had to turn to and do my own cooking. That may sound ordinary enough now, but it was not so in those days, especially in the East. I had arranged to meet Lionel Lang, of the Bombay Political but now again a soldier and in command of the Seistan Levy Corps, at Rui Khaf, between Turbat Sheikh Jam and Kain. I had sent a pony and two of the escort ahead so as to be able to do a double stage. About half-way I felt pretty bad. I did most of the second stage as fast as my pony would take me, so as to get in before I felt worse. I remember that at Rui Khaf I entered a long upper room at one end and Lang came in at the other and we shook hands. Then we both collapsed. I have no recollection of what happened during the next two or three days. It was the 1918 influenza, which perhaps had a good deal to do with the rapid ending of the war in Europe. How, almost in a moment, it travelled all over Europe and much of Asia, taking mountains and deserts in its stride, nobody knew. In an isolated Levy post on the edge of the desert towards Kirman, eighty miles from anywhere, ninety out of a hundred men died.

At Kain I found a cypher telegram from Simla in reply to the report I had sent from Meshed. The first paragraph appeared to give me a rap on the knuckles for having ventured to poke my nose in. But it was redeemed by a very brief para. 2 which read



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

'However we quite understand'. The decision had been taken to continue Dale as O.C. troops and to send up Brigadier Dickson, R.E., to develop the l. of c.

After saying good-bye to Prideaux at Birjand I went off to spend the winter in Seistan. On the way I met some of the Levies who had taken Kreyer and me up to Meshed, and the two young stallions. There were two Levies on in front riding their little mares, then came my two horses, and then two more Levies. I had given strict orders that my horses, which were soft, were never to go faster than a walk, all the seven hundred miles. They looked very fit indeed and, wanting always to be up with the mares in front, had developed into the finest walkers I have ever known. Nor did they ever lose the habit. Perhaps it was a habit that was cultivated too seldom; for few things do so much to keep horses fit and to make a long journey short as fast walking.

The Seistan Levy Corps was the creation of Prideaux's brain and personality. The Baluchis of the Seistan border owned camels and knew all that there was to be known about camels. Many of them knew a great deal also about raiding. They were at home in desert country and they were tough. There was a story that on a pitilessly hot day a Seistani of the oasis offered a Baluchi water. "Dog, I drank yesterday," was the reply. The Baluch organization was tribal. If a man who had been a raider took service and proved faithful, that not only meant one raider less and a reformed thief set to catch a thief; he could also obtain information from his tribesmen and influence them. By religion most Baluchis were Sunnis. In the Seistan oasis on the other hand the villagers were mostly Shiah<sup>1</sup>s. They owned a lot of small tough ponies and were fair riders. None of these men had any experience of soldiering and hardly any of them could read and write; and it is difficult to run a corps entirely without paper.

Prideaux hit on a new idea. He had a small consular cavalry escort; and it so happened that for reasons of international policy a number of officers and men of that fine regiment, the Hazara Pioneers, whose homes were in East Persia, had recently been disbanded. Prideaux formed camelry, mounted infantry, and in-

<sup>1</sup> Shiah<sup>1</sup>s recognize Ali, the son-in-law of Mahomed, as his successor. Sunnis, who do not, claim to be the orthodox church. Most Indian Mahomedans are Sunnis and most Persians are Shiah<sup>1</sup>s.



## EAST PERSIA

fantry units of fifty men, under their own natural leaders, and attached to each unit a regular or ex-regular soldier who could read and write and on whose steadiness he could rely. From the same material he formed also a corps of instructors at headquarters in Seistan and at Birjand. But about drill he worried very little, especially in the early days. Taking a risk, he equipped the corps with 303 rifles. The current price of such rifles across the Afghan border was £80.

In recent years raiders had molested east Persian routes from bases as far distant as Turkestan, six hundred miles away. Bold in attack, the thing which raiders were apt to dislike most was any threat to their safety on the return journey. For this reason the general disposition of posts for watch and ward was on a perimeter of some twelve hundred miles, well away from the main line of communications. Few raiders would face the risk of raiding fifty miles inside a line of Levy posts spaced twenty miles apart.

Perhaps the Levies were at their useful best at about the time when I first became concerned with them. Not very smart in dress, their typical form of salute was by bringing the forearm up across the eyes. But good British officers—they were in the proportion of about one officer to two hundred men—and good instructors are never content unless their men become smarter and smarter. On return from some months of duty in outposts, the men would be first given leave and then be put through a course of training in Seistan or at Birjand. Thus gradually they became smarter.

Among my first guests in Seistan were Dr. Annandale, head of the Zoological Survey of India, and Dr. Kemp, the chief zoologist on more than one South Polar expedition. In Egypt Indian troops had suffered from bilharzia, a severe form of anæmia. This was caused by the entry into the human body of the minute eggs of a fluke which lives in the liver of a very small water-snail. It was feared that this snail might occur in the rivers and lakes of Seistan and the scientists had come to find out whether it did. They went to examine an irrigation ditch in the Consulate garden and soon returned beaming with a joy which I did not share. They had found what appeared to be the correct snail. On examining the snails more closely they discovered that their shells had half a



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

whorl more, or it may have been less, than the genuine article; so all was well.

Early in 1919 the l. of c. from Duzdap to Meshed was getting into its stride when suddenly news was received of the assassination of Habibullah, the Amir of Afghanistan. German war plans had exploded like a delayed-action bomb. Probably with a view to directing criticism away from himself, Habibullah's youngest son, Amanulla, who had seized power, proclaimed holy war (*jehad*) against India. In a moment what had been a six hundred mile l. of c. became a front towards Afghanistan.

Dickson, who had taken over Dale's duties in addition to his own, had been too busy to spare time to visit Seistan. Judging the situation from a distance, he telegraphed asking me to arrange for the Seistan Levies to be withdrawn from the Afghan border and from Seistan and concentrated on the main l. of c. I replied that I was ordering preliminary concentrations in accordance with his wishes, but that I trusted that he would not insist on major withdrawals until we had had a talk. I was confident that the Levies would be staunch in defending their homes and would thus safeguard the l. of c.; but I expected that many might desert rather than expose their homes to danger from Afghan troops or raiders. In the end it was decided that the Levies had better stand fast.

The strength of the Levy Corps was then about 1,400. To meet the Afghan threat and lighten the work of regular troops I was authorized to increase the strength by 1,000. Service in the Corps being popular, this was not difficult; but it involved the arrival from India of several young British officers, who of course knew no Persian. Something had to be done to help them to learn Persian quickly; and I was feeling the same need myself. During my last year in England I had passed an examination in Persian which included grammar and composition and some study of the works of the poet Sadi and other famous authors; but in regard to the ordinary daily business of life I was still dumb. For help I turned to Davis Heron, our doctor and Vice Consul, and asked him to work up a dozen simple conversations on everyday topics. This was done; and so we had a set of phrases such as the British officers of the Levies had occasion to use every day—about getting up in the morning, drill, sport, and the stereotyped politenesses which occupy a considerable part of any social visit in Persia. I have lost



## EAST PERSIA

my copy, but I remember in particular a phrase about Seistan being a *madan i purr*—a mine of black partridge—*purr* being a Seistani word suggested by the whirr of their wings. The sentences were a great success. After a few weeks Dickson in Birjand was asked to appoint an examiner to see whether several candidates were fit to pass the Field Service Test. He wired back, asking me to examine them. I was able to pass most of them and drew some small fee for conducting the exam. Then I asked that I also might be examined for the same test. I passed and became entitled to a monthly language allowance.

Seistan certainly was a *madan i purr*, and it was full of grey partridge too, especially in the vineyards and where there was good tamarisk cover. The birds were fairly easy to bring to the guns provided they were driven towards cover and not away from it. On the Hamun there were hundreds of thousands of duck and geese. They were wary because they were always being trapped by the *sayyads* who lived by fishing and wild-fowling. A local method, which worked best when there was a high wind, was to construct a line of butts in water a foot or two deep. Men would dig down into the clay bottom, heaping the spoil round the edge of the hole, empty out the water, and hide the butt as much as possible with reeds or tamarisk. Levies on their ponies would go into the water and act as beaters. Down-wind the birds would come very fast and usually high. If they could be induced to come back again up-wind, they offered easier shots. We occasionally played polo on a mud plain as smooth and as hard as a billiard table. But already men were beginning to be more car-minded than horse-minded.

I spent most of the hot weather of 1919 in Seistan. The Afghan war was not yet officially over when one evening I received a telegram which stated that peace with Germany had been signed. It seemed advisable to celebrate the good news at once, so I sent out messages inviting officers to come across to the Consulate. Then I went to my wine store to see about some drink. My general idea was something fairly potent in the cocktail line, but, finding an opened bottle of claret, I added its contents. This made some think that they were drinking claret cup and they helped each other accordingly. Before long I found myself knocking the heads off bottles of brandy and other spirits in an attempt to keep up



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

with the demand. One man complained next day that the drink must have been pretty bad stuff. He had put a match to his glass and the contents had caught fire. Spirits were stronger in those days than they are now. The party was successful in its main purpose. From sounds proceeding from the Consulate the local inhabitants gathered that some important and auspicious event was being celebrated. When they learned that the war with Germany was definitely over, they decided that there was no need to worry about an Afghan war.

A welcome guest was Eric Bailey, as his fellow Politicals always called him. Actually he was F. M. Bailey, the blue poppy Mecconopsis Baileyi man. He had distinguished himself in the 1904 Younghusband expedition to Lhasa and had been one of my predecessors as British Trade Agent at Gyantse. In 1917 he had set out with Blacker of The Guides and Etherton (see Blacker's 'On Secret Patrol in High Asia') to find out what was really happening in Russian Turkestan. I had hoped at one time that, if a follow-up patrol should be needed, I might be allowed to go. After many hardships and adventures he had been captured by the Bolsheviks, changed his identity, and finally crossed the border between Russia and Persia as a Russian secret service agent in pursuit of an escaped suspect named Bailey. He tells the story well in his 'Mission to Tashkent'.

He seemed to have stood his hardships well; but I noticed that, when he was talking, he liked to stand with his back to the angle made by two solid walls and kept on looking this way and that, as if to make sure that nobody was wanting to take a shot at him. Typically of him, his book ends with a list of more than a hundred kinds of butterflies observed during his journey.

Dickson reorganized the main l. of c. into seven sections, three south of Birjand, three between Birjand and Meshed and one between Meshed and the Russian border. He put each section in charge of an Administrative Commandant. Several of these admincoms had come straight from civil life. Dickson called them Majors and told them to wear red tabs. Field rank and the red tabs did much to increase their confidence in themselves and the respect in which they were held. The line was working well by the time it was decided by higher authority that they were not Majors and were not entitled to wear red tabs.



## EAST PERSIA

There were few dull moments. Dickson encouraged initiative and for road work found a winner in Burt who knew how dirt roads were made in some of the most arid and torrid parts of the United States. Burt would fix on long stretches of dead straight alignment, dig two ditches fifteen yards apart and throw up the spoil inwards, well clear of the ditches. At first men would curse him for having produced something worse in the way of roads than ever before. But soon the spoil set like a rampart. It was an economical method and impressive.

For Supply and Transport Dickson's right-hand man was Mark Synge. We all loved him and enjoyed working with him and did our best to become acclimatized to the atmosphere of W.T.M. (Week-Ton-Miles, believed to be a formula of his own invention) in which he lived. The crux of his problem seemed to be that, even where military reports state 'camel grazing abundant', a great number of camels soon eat up all the grazing. It was some 180 miles from Duzdap to Neh, where local supplies began to be available. If a camel travels an average of 10 miles a day, carries 400 lb., has to be supplied with 20 lb. of grain and fodder a day both on the outward and on the return march, and must be rested one month in three, a nightmarish situation is soon reached in which, the more camels you have, the more you need. The problems of the East Persia line of communications are dealt with in Brigadier-General W. E. R. Dickson's 'East Persia'.

One of my jobs was to help Mark Synge's representative in Seistan to obtain a large amount of supplies, and to get them carried to his desert l. of c. at or below Neh on donkeys, which, small as they were, carried 160 lb. plus their own rations. Even so it was reckoned that from rail-head 12,000 camels were carrying rations for camels.

Camels were more and more frequently reported as dead from overwork or as having been carried off by raiders and the Indian camel contractors claimed compensation. Actually in Baluch country it was inconceivable that a camel should die or be stolen without everybody knowing about it. It was good Baluch tribal law that anybody who had ever owned a camel, if only as a young foal, could recognize it even years later. In desert areas where camels left no track perceptible to an ordinary person, the Baluchi Levy patrols were responsible for reporting if the limits of their



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

area had been passed by any camel whose tracks they did not recognize. The idea that on hard ground a camel might leave no track was not accepted. So stories of thefts were not believed. As to deaths, it was decided not to pay out on camels unless their tails were produced. Their health then improved.

For Levy buildings we were our own architects and supervisors. No timber is available in Seistan and houses are roofed with domes of flat broad mud bricks, the work, as Dickson points out in his book, being done entirely by eye. 'Work is commenced at the corners of the walls . . . and is given the necessary curve inwards by slightly raising the outside of each brick, as it is laid, with mud mortar.' The result is that, where one might look for the keystone of the arch, there is no pressure, and a space, with a hood over, can be left for ventilation and light. Such buildings cost very little. An unusual feature of the Levy lines was a number of mud mangers with cowls to prevent fodder from being blown away by the pitiless north wind.

Vegetables were wanted for the Indian troops. The difficulty was that much of the Consulate garden was ankle-deep in a salty crust due to the evaporation of irrigation water. The local cure was to take a crop or two of an annual clover which eats up salt. After that peas, beans, cabbages, chrysanthemums, tomatoes and much else flourished.

Then there was the question of how to keep going the Ford vans which carried the post to Meshed once a week. Dickson said that the weekly motor mail meant a lot to the personnel on the l. of c. and at Meshed, but he did not see how, in view of the difficulty of petrol supply, he could keep it going any longer. This problem was solved—on lines which I had tried out some years before for the Trade Agent's post between Phari and Gyantse in Tibet—by establishing a Levy relay service on camels and mules. It was kept going day and night without difficulty and cost nothing extra. Besides giving two posts a week instead of one, it knocked a day and a half off the time that had been taken by the Ford cars. Over the roads as they were then, cars could not go fast or travel by night.

Lang had been succeeded in command of the Levies by that very gallant soldier Piggy Heath. After the Afghan war, the Government of India decided that expenditure on the Levies should be



## EAST PERSIA

reduced. They left the details to Heath and me and we decided to reduce the strength of units from 50 to 30. Many of the men, having saved money, were willing to take their discharge. How far the Levy Corps had developed out of the primitiveness of the early days of the War was shown by the fact that a detachment of volunteers from the Levies took the place of regular Indian troops as the consular garrison at Muscat in the Persian Gulf. Under McCarthy, who had been quarter-master of the Levies, they proved a complete success. I felt confident in putting his name forward. I had noticed that his response to the extra jobs of work which—as is apt to happen to the best workers—were thrown at him from time to time, was to look a little fitter and cheerier than before and to develop a few more wrinkles under his chin.

With outdoor work to be done early in the morning and office work which might go on until late at night, it was difficult during the Seistan hot weather to keep awake in the afternoon. I found a remedy in half an hour's sleep before lunch. I would wake fresh and hungry and able to tackle an afternoon's work.

Happening to be in Delhi on some business in the spring of 1920, I was invited to act for a time as Deputy Secretary in the Foreign Department in place of Norman Cater while he acted as Foreign Secretary in place of Sir Henry Dobbs, British plenipotentiary at the Afghan peace conference. Since the 'flu of 1918 I had not been fully fit and it was a pleasant change. It was also a refresher course in seeing how things looked from the point of view of the Government of India. I met Colonel Howard-Bury, who was planning the first Everest expedition, and was able to give him some information about the routes through Sikkim. On the lighter side, I became a Black Heart, and spent some evenings in the back row of the chorus of *The Quaker Girl*. Denison Ross, the distinguished linguist, was great in the song 'Oh, won't you come to the ball?'. But I noticed a difference from the Simla of 1912, and even of 1918. Men, most of whom had not had leave for a long time, were war-weary, and neither British nor Indians appeared to know in what direction the Montagu-Chelmsford programme of political advance might lead. Nerves seemed to be wearing thin.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

At Quetta, on the way back to Seistan, I received a telegram which began 'Secret. Decypher yourself'. At the Club bar I met the G.O.C.-in-Chief and asked whether there was any news. He blandly replied that everything was just as usual. I murmured "Decypher yourself." "Oh, you've got that too, have you? You'd better come and see me tomorrow morning." The news was that all British and Indian troops were to be withdrawn from East Persia as quickly as possible.

Winter would soon be on us and it was desirable that all troops should be clear of Neh on their way south by the middle of October. Not much was needed in the way of protection because the Levies could see to that. Some of the tidying up was left to those who remained behind. Under East Persian conditions Ford vans were apt to be given a new engine one day and a new chassis another. The only trouble I ran into with the authorities was when they found that one of the vans I returned to India had never existed. Perhaps it had been built up round a duplicate number plate.

At Christmas I received orders to disband the Levies. This was a ticklish business, with 1,500 men, armed with rifles worth two or three years' pay, spread out over a perimeter of 1,200 miles, but Heath and his officers rose to the occasion. At a New Year's Durbar held at the Consulate I congratulated the Persian officers of the Corps on the fine work they had done, told them that the Corps must now be disbanded and announced substantial rewards. These included the presentation of rifles to the Persian officers and N.C.O.s. The record of the Corps from first to last was that in six years, in a force which had at one time been 2,400 strong, the loss of arms from all causes, including hostile action, was seven rifles. For his services, Heath was awarded the C.I.E., which was followed by a Brevet, and the work of several of his officers received recognition. A few weeks later I was granted furlough.



## VI

### *East Persia*

1921-25

SOON after my arrival in England I called at the India office. It was only a few years since competition to secure appointment to the civil services of India had been fierce. Now I was asked whether I would care to help in a recruitment drive. When I enquired whether I could tell young men that they had a life-career before them, the reply was that this could not be promised. So I asked to be excused. A few days later I was taken to an after-dinner meeting at an Oxford College on the same subject. No less an orator than Lord Birkenhead urged the attractions of Indian service on an audience which contained many dons. His exhortations fell flat. They put the same question and received the same reply.

By the kindness of Mr. Montagu I was offered the opportunity of serving for some months as Political A.D.C. at the India Office. But I thought that would mean too many late nights and what I most wanted was to get fit.

In the dry climate of Persia, far from the sea, my one great desire had been to do some sailing. I had written home about this and my brother had telegraphed 'Expert advises six metre.' I had very little idea of what this meant, but I wired back asking him to carry on. He placed the order with Fife of Fairlie and it was thus that the six-metre *Polly* came to be built. Heckstall-Smith, with characteristic helpfulness, put me in touch with that excellent helmsman Granville Keele. He in turn persuaded Alf Diaper to join as skipper. Alf had been skipper of one of the *Shamrocks* and, after other employment during the war, was wanting to get his hand in again at sailing. Tom Ratsey took a fatherly interest in us and Lallow's Yard never failed us. So, curiously, beginning my apprenticeship in sail at the top, I found myself the owner of a six metre which was as successful as any that year, particularly in



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

the British-American team races which took place for the first time in 1921. The venture cost me £800.

While *Polly* was still in the hands of Fife, William Steele, a Calcutta business friend, invited me to sail with him to Scotland in his 27-ton yawl, *Siola*. After a slow cruise to Penzance in the lightest of winds, he decided to have a shot at getting round Land's End. Then the wind began to blow and the seas rose and in forty-nine hours, eight of which were under bare poles, we were off Ailsa Craig.

At Weymouth and again, owing to an engine breakdown, at Dartmouth we had found ourselves alongside Steele's late partner Guy Shorrock in *Shearwater*. At Weymouth, taking a look round early in the morning, I noticed on the deck of *Shearwater* a small figure in a tight white sweater. One meeting was enough, but the second was quite too much; and in September Lorraine and I were married. In the interval she had been a mascot on board *Polly*. Those who remember Granville Keele will realize how he must have had to screw up his courage and how convinced he must have been of the urgency of the situation, when, after we had done well in the earlier races of the British-American series and then not so well, he said to me, "I think we had better telegraph for the Little Lady."

Lorraine Kebbell, a Macdonald on her mother's side, came of stock which had gone out to New Zealand with the early settlers. Nobody meeting her mother in England would have guessed that she was well used to cooking for twenty men at sheep-shearing time. Both mother and daughter admired, above all other women, Lady (Claude) Macdonald, then living at the Royal Cottage, Kew, who had been the heroine of the Legations at the time of the Boxer rising in China. I think Lorraine felt that life as a Political's wife might be a worth-while existence. Fond as she was of dancing and other delights, they were not what came first with her. The East is apt to be made or marred for English men and women by their early experiences. I knew that in East Persia, even if there was very little European companionship and not very much in the way of the comforts of life, we should be amongst friends. So I suggested that at the end of my leave I might again be posted to Seistan.

It did not take me long to realize that conditions on the railway



## EAST PERSIA

journey to Duzdap and on to Seistan by a road which was already falling into decay were rougher than had been apparent to a bachelor, but Lorraine stuck them. In Seistan at once the servants became her ready helpers. She fell in love with a spirited but well-mannered Arab pony which I had taken over from Prideaux, enjoyed days after partridge and duck, was at her ease with Persians, and started to learn Persian with an old Persian schoolmaster. But soon Dick began to loom on the horizon and it was decided that the event should take place in Simla. As the road had broken up so much as to be hardly passable by car, we set off with ponies, plus what the Persians call a *takht i ravan*, or 'travelling throne'. This was a wooden, roofed, springless litter on poles, between which mules were harnessed. It was soon given up. At last we reached the cool of Lord Kitchener's old country house, Wildflower Hall, a few miles beyond Simla. Denys Bray, the Foreign Secretary, and his wife Cis, and Buckie whose country house, Dukani, was close to Wildflower Hall, and the great-spirited Miss Hotz whose family owned Wildflower Hall, took Lorraine to their hearts. Dick was born in August and was christened in the little church in the viceregal estate. Alice Perry having joined us as his nurse, we travelled back to Duzdap in October. The main road to Seistan having gone from bad to worse, we travelled by the frontier route on ponies and with a dilapidated Victoria carriage. It was a rough journey.

The idea was to spend a quiet winter in Seistan and then to move up to Birjand. But there was an interruption.

As in Seistan and the Kainat, the war arrangements in the Sarhad region south of Seistan, which had been the concern of Baluchistan, could not be continued indefinitely. When they came to an end, Afghan raiders were quick to resume their old habits. A party of Afghan Shinwari tribesmen, who had come from a long way to the east, raided a trade caravan near Koh Malik Siah. They were chased away by a party of men mounted on ponies who had until recently been serving in the Seistan Levy Corps. In two days the pursuers covered 120 miles on one drink. Another party raided the railway near Juzak and captured an assistant engineer. They put him on a camel and, to keep him quiet, stitched his right hand behind his back to his left ear and carried him off across the Afghan border. Having occasion to go down to



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Duzdap on some business, I narrowly missed running into one of the Shinwari raiding parties. I went on to Quetta to discuss the situation. What I most wanted to know was how much longer Baluchistan would continue to be interested in the Duzdap area, and whether, and when, it would become the concern of the Kirman or of the Seistan consulate.

In the spring of 1923 we went to Birjand, where Bob was born that autumn.

So far I have had much to say about the day's work of a British Consul in East Persia in wartime, but little about the Persians.

The Kainat and Seistan took their tone from the Governor, Mahomed Ibrahim, Amir of the Kainat. It was the practice for the Shah of Persia—at a great price, it was said—to confer titles of nobility; and His Excellency the Governor was best known by his title of Shaukat ul Mulk, 'The Glory of the Dominion'. (The same word 'Amir' occurs in Amir ul Bahr, 'Lord of the Sea', which is the origin of the word Admiral.) Other members of the family were Samsam ud Dauleh, 'Sword of the Kingdom', the Deputy Governor of Seistan, and Hisam ud Dauleh, 'Prop of the Kingdom', who lived at Birjand. Another prominent member of society at Birjand was usually referred to as Shah Zadeh, 'Of the Seed of the Shah', owing to some trace of royal blood in his veins. Also, as in Seistan, there was a Karguzar who represented the Persian Foreign Office.

Critics of the British way of life in India have been apt to find fault with the fact that social relations between British officials and Indians were not more intimate. Perhaps such critics have been apt to overlook the considerations that executive authority tends inevitably to exercise an isolating influence and that, if men are debarred by religion from eating the same food, and if the touch of one man's hand, and even the passing of his shadow, involves the ceremonial defilement of the other (it is good to hear that such prejudices are now on the wane in India), frank and equal social contact is not an easy matter. In East Persia such difficulties did not exist. Having no executive authority, one could not be isolated by it; it was not a matter of picking and choosing one's friends but of fitting into a local society which already existed; and the Shaukat and his circle had an ease of manner which made us feel welcome guests in their country. In conversation some



## EAST PERSIA

small knowledge of French, which seems to come easily to Persians, helped to keep the ball rolling.

Good humour also helped. In Seistan Davis Heron had been relieved as Consulate doctor by Robert MacGregor. In earlier days in Tibet MacGregor had shown that he was quick in establishing confidence and at picking up a new language. One day I received an urgent request to call on Samsam, the corpulent Deputy Governor. "Please, please," he said, "get rid of that dreadful new doctor of yours. He must be mad. I asked him to come to see me because I am suffering from an ordinary slight indiscretion of diet and he has ordered me to eat nothing for a month." It transpired that there had been a slight muddle between the Persian words for three and thirty (days), which are similar, and between the words for a light diet and for complete fasting. On hearing the explanation, The Sword of the Kingdom shook and heaved and gasped with laughter.

The Shaukat, who was, I believe, the last of the hereditary Governors of Persia, was descended from a long line of the Amirs of the Kainat. His rule was personal. Tall, strong, lithe, of olive complexion, somewhat hawk-nosed, with ears which were all attention, and eyes and mouth which could be both gentle and strong, he ruled his people firmly and gave the land peace many days. I remember in particular two interviews. Two men of the Seistan Levy Corps had spoiled the fine record of the Corps by making off across the Afghan border with their rifles. I mentioned the matter to the Shaukat who replied that he had no idea what I was talking about. It appeared to him to be inconceivable that a foreign Consul should be employing armed Persians in Persia. When I was about to leave he said, as if casually, that, if he himself were concerned with raising men for local watch and ward, he would never think of employing men of the particular neighbourhood from which these men came. I thanked him and asked Piggy Heath in Seistan by telegram to sack the whole unit.

It must have been about two years after this that one morning a messenger arrived to enquire whether I could make it convenient to call on the Shaukat without delay. His Excellency and I had hardly finished the usual cups of tea and coffee, during which the discussion of anything of importance was debarred by Persian etiquette, when he got straight down to business. He apologized



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

for the trouble he was giving, but the matter was urgent. Persia was to have a new Parliament. A Parliament was a democratic institution and I was the local representative of the country of the Mother of Parliaments. Members to represent the Kainat and Seistan would have to be elected. He did not need advice as to who should be elected, because that had been decided. But would I please, out of my experience, tell him what sort of majorities were generally considered suitable? In reply I suggested that variety has its charms and that there might be a mixture of close-run elections and of overwhelming majorities. He thought this a good idea. (After all, were there not days when Knights of the Shire were compelled to go to Westminster?)

The Shaukat was a keen bridge player, fond of tennis (he could put a nasty cut on the ball) and a splendid host. His idea of a good party was for the guests to assemble about midday when there would be drinks and talk. Then lunch, followed by a siesta, and after that tea, tennis, bath and dinner. Sometimes, after dinner, a knife would be spun and whoever it pointed to would have to get up at once and make a speech in any language or in a mixture of languages, or perhaps by gesture only. Or sometimes there would, in the Russian fashion which was perhaps the origin of the cocktail party, be *zakouska* consisting of caviare from the Caspian and many other good things. Toasts would be drunk and, after a short dinner, we would play bridge.

I wonder whether it is behind the veil or in public that women are apt to wield more influence. In high-class Persian families it appeared to be a frequent custom for the wife to be concerned with the care of the children and for her mother-in-law to be the head of the household. Lorraine had made some progress in speaking Persian (with a better accent than mine, which was marred by Hindustani) and could read and write it a little. The fact that the Shaukat's mother approved of her and was genuinely fond of her meant much in my relations with the Shaukat.

Another interesting member of Birjand society was General Vigornitzky. Having served under the late Tsar, he was a refugee from the Bolsheviks. A man of great patience and determination, he succeeded in teaching me some Russian, in which I afterwards passed an examination in London. Russian struck me as being the finest language since classical Greek. I wonder whether, when we



## EAST PERSIA

measure the strength of Russia, we are apt to make enough allowance for the unifying power of the language.

A courteous people, the Frenchmen of the East, the Persians excelled themselves in their accepted formula for taking leave after a call—"I now proceed to remove the causes of inconvenience". It was good manners for a man to inform his friends of the date and hour that he would be setting out on a journey and then to leave on the previous evening. Thus, with a minimum of inconvenience, his friends could write, or send a messenger, to say how sorry they were not to have had the honour of saying good-bye, and he could thank them for their kind intention.

It seemed to be a common practice for Persian troops to make a very short march the first day and a very long one the next day. During the first night anything that had been forgotten could be sent for and anyone who had not been ready for the start could catch up. The East Persians were great walkers. Levies who came from an area 100 miles south of Birjand would often, when granted leave, reach their homes from Birjand in two nights and one day. In order that they might not get sore feet, they would carry their boots round their necks.

For many years the Persian Customs service had been directed by a few Belgian officers. They worked zealously and with tact and were cheery men. An incident long remembered in Meshed was a tennis match between the Belgian Chief of Customs, a man of great bulk, and our Chief of Posts and Telegraphs, who was thick-set but tough. The Belgian challenged our man to play him at level weights and our man, carrying several stones of lead, just won.

The main item in the export trade of Persia was carpets. In order to maintain the quality and reputation of Persian carpets—the trade was then centred on London—there was a Persian law which prohibited, or rendered liable to a heavy tax, the export of carpets and rugs of which the wool had been treated with dyes not fast to wool. The import of such dyes was prohibited and the Persian law laid down that, if a smuggler was detected, the penalty was a heavy fine and the confiscation both of the goods and of the *moyen de transport*. One day at Duzdap Allum, then Chief Engineer of the railway, had arrived by train early in the morning. He would be going back by the same train in the evening. The next



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

train would be some days later. The engine which had brought him was the only one at Duzdap or anywhere near. About midday he asked me to come to see him. He was fuming. The fireman of the engine had been detected smuggling a packet of aniline dye, hidden under the coal on the tender, and the engine, as the *moyen de transport*, had been impounded.

The Belgian Chief of Customs at Duzdap was M. Henri Paquet, an excellent man. In 1914 he had abandoned his career in Persia in order to serve in the War. One day I found him very cross. The British practice was to distribute war medals with suitable ceremony. He had received his through the post marked *échantillons sans valeur*, 'Samples. No value. If addressee not known, treat as abandoned'.

The railway from Nushki to Duzdap (since re-named Zahidan) had been built as a war measure and much of my work about this time was in connection with its future. If only it had been continued to Neh, as had been intended in the summer of 1918, a great deal of money would have been saved and the lives of thousands of camels would have been spared. But now our troops had been evacuated from East Persia and the authorities in India were inclined to regard the railway as a white elephant. Service on it was not popular except with a few enthusiasts such as Martin, the Superintendent of the Nushki extension, and it spoiled the figures of the North-Western Railway. Many strategic railways in frontier areas were for this reason not well liked by the Railway Board.

On the other hand, thanks to the extension of the railway, trade by the East Persia route had increased twenty-fold, and I was determined to save the railway if I could. This involved some study of railway finance. It appeared that the basic principle was to fix rates according to 'what the traffic would bear', regard being had also to weight in proportion to bulk and convenience of handling. Thus a ton of gold would be charged more than a ton of grain, a ton of feathers more than a ton of lead, and small consignments more than wagon-loads of the same articles. Over long distances rates were telescopic, the rate for a thousand miles being very much less than ten times the rate for a hundred miles.

Difficult as it had been to construct the railway in a waterless country, it would be no less difficult, and very costly, to pick up



the rails and sleepers. The protection of working parties would also cost money. The net value of the materials might in fact be nil. Great expense had been incurred, and Persian opinion had been offended, when after the war the railway from Bushire to Borasjun had been dismantled, loaded onto ships at a time when shipping was very scarce and then thrown overboard into the sea.

Moreover goods which could stand the cost of being carried for several hundred miles by camel to or from Duzdap were just those goods on which charges were heaviest. It might thus pay the main-line railways of India to carry such goods at a reduced rate over long distances rather than lose the traffic; and it was possible to urge that the Duzdap section, if its capital were written down to its break-up value, and if charges on that section were increased, would pay its way.

I do not know which of these arguments carried most weight or whether it was importunity that prevailed. Anyhow it was decided that the Duzdap railway should continue to exist. In the 1939-45 war, at a time of great scarcity of railway material, it was torn up; only to be relaid when it became necessary to develop every possible means of sending war supplies to Russia. From Duzdap the supplies were taken on to the Kainat by a road, constructed at a great cost, along the western edge of the Seistan plain. Presumably the existence of the much better route via the Duzdap-Neh railway alignment, west of the range of the Forty Virgins, had been forgotten.

Some of the most enterprising of the Indian traders in East Persia were Sikhs from the Punjab, many of whom had started with only a few rupees of capital. Normally they were good enough men to deal with, but in 1923 there was trouble in the Punjab with a section of Sikhs called Akalis and some Akalis found their way to Duzdap. Baluchistan had ceased to take much interest in Duzdap and the question whether Duzdap should in future be in the area of the Kirman or of the Seistan Consulate had not yet been decided. Hearing that there was trouble, I went down from Birjand to Duzdap. Every day and at night Sikhs paraded round my quarters, beating tins, shouting abuse and using seditious language. After a disagreeably long wait I learned that Duzdap was to be my pidgin and I was about to take proceedings on the serious charge of sedition when one of the Sikhs came to me and



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

complained against some of the noisiest of the Akalis. The offence alleged was trivial. I decided to make a show of investigating this allegation fully and for several days sat in court from nine to one and from two to five. The effect was remarkable. All that these ardent seditionists had needed was evidence that they were subject to the normal procedure of laws to which they were accustomed. The throwing of a handful of dust is a time-honoured method of dealing with a swarm of bees.

One night at Birjand, a few days before Bob was born, Lorraine had gone to bed and I was reading in the drawing room, when there was the sound of horses' hooves and a knocking on the door. It was Melvin and Josephine Hall, who had arrived unannounced from Teheran. They added greatly to the enjoyment of the next eighteen months.

With the exception of the Customs Department, the finances of the Persian Government had long been in chaos. Some years earlier the American Shuster had been invited to put them in order; and now a similar task was being undertaken by Dr. Millspaugh and a small team of American officers of whom Melvin Hall was one. He has given excellent accounts of his experiences in Persia and in many other parts of the world in his books, 'Journey to the End of an Era' and 'The Bird of Time'. I will not attempt to imitate or to cap his stories. His tributes to the Shaukat are notable.

Dr. Millspaugh and his team would have got nowhere if with tact they had not combined a certain amount of forcefulness. They had been granted high financial authority and needed to show that they had it. In Persia it was the custom that the less exalted official should pay the first call. When Melvin went on to Seistan, the Deputy Governor was not inclined to call on him. Melvin sat quiet and said nothing, but after a few days the Deputy Governor found that pay had been stopped for himself and for all who served under him. After a time he decided that he had better pay the first call.

It had long been a custom that Persian subjects who had a serious grievance, or sought refuge from their enemies—such as the relations of a murderer—took *bast* in some place, such as the shrine of Imam Reza at Meshed, where they could not be touched. Amongst such places were the offices of the Indo-European Tele-



## EAST PERSIA

graph Department. It was the common belief that all telegraph lines led to the private apartments of the Shah. It was thus that one day I found the telegraph office in the Consulate besieged by a mob of peasants who had some grievance.

Even a Governor, who might have bought his governorship at a high price, was aware that, if those over whom he ruled should become loud in their complaints, he might receive a courteous but firm invitation to visit Teheran. Such a visit, which would involve appearance at the court of the Shah and calls on Ministers, was apt to be exceedingly expensive.

Shuster, and Millspaugh after him, saw clearly that, if Persia was to advance on Western lines, there must be a proper system of financial control, and especially of accounts and audit, throughout the country. But they were not able to develop the idea very far.

I wish I could have seen much more of Persia and its peoples. Three times the size of France and for the most part a table-land, the scene of the coming and going of conquerors since before the beginning of history and the invader of regions which stretch from Greece to Delhi, a land of hard-etched hill ranges and of great plains, the great majority of its thirty millions have constantly before them evidence of the fact that it is only by the labour of their hands that they can live. For it is by sinking shafts until water is found underground, and leading the water through tunnels which eventually cut the surface, that crops are supplied throughout most of Persia with the moisture which they need. Artistry, craftsmanship and application are shown in the carpets and rugs which are woven, in infinite variety, in every village and in every nomad tent. The chief thing lacking has been administration. Without that no country can stand up to the impact of modern world conditions.

In the autumn of 1924 we went down to Seistan, and got ready to go home on leave early in the New Year. The prospects of the journey to Duzdap were uncertain. In Seistan the winter can be perfect for a few days, but at any time a very strong north wind, as bad as the hot weather hundred and twenty days' wind, may begin to blow. The weather turns very cold, the sky becomes dark and the air is filled with choking grit. We decided to ride most of the way to Duzdap. We fixed up one of the very large dress



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

trunks of those days, on poles, for Dick and Bob to travel in and took along with us a cow to give them fresh milk. The second day out there was a blizzard. The trunk, with the lid shut except for a chink, proved a good conveyance, but the cold was too much for the cow and its milk gave out.

At times of exceptionally high water the Seistan Hamun drains through a deep steep-sided channel into the Gaud i Zirreh, which lies eighty miles away to the south-east. That year there had been good summer rains in Afghanistan and East Persia and the Seistan Hamun was high. A northerly blizzard piled up the water at the southern end of the Hamun and we received news that a flood ten feet deep was pouring down the channel which lay across our route a day's march ahead. It seemed likely that we might be held up on its banks in the middle of the desert for many days. Then in the nick of time what we had no reason to hope came to pass. Did something of the same kind happen when the Israelites passed dry-shod across the Red Sea and the pursuing hosts of Pharaoh were overwhelmed in its waters? Suddenly the wind changed from north to south—a direction from which it very seldom blows in Seistan—the waters of the Hamun were driven back and we were able to ford the channel. Two days later we heard that, with the change of wind back to the north, the channel was again impassable.

From Duzdap we went by train to Karachi and on to Bombay by British India steamer. There we were to be the guests of the Governor, Sir Leslie Wilson. Having been nurse-less for some months, we had arranged for the help of a nurse for the few days we were to be there and we heaved sighs of relief when we saw her coming off to us in the Governor's launch. With her was an A.D.C. to the Governor. We planted Dick on the A.D.C. (who, after the manner of perfect A.D.C.s, didn't turn a hair), and Bob on the nurse and sat back.



## VII

### *Kabul*

1926-29

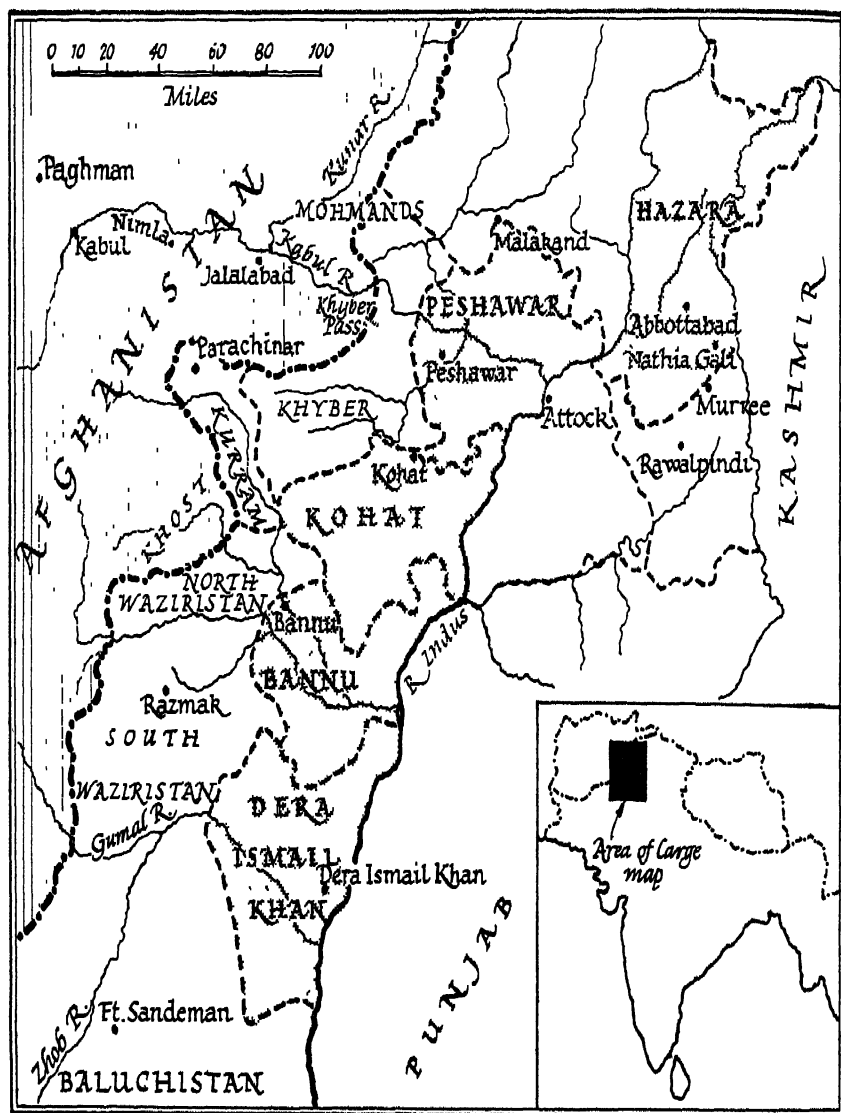
ON return from leave towards the end of 1925 I was posted as secretary to the Resident in Kashmir. After East Persia, no prospect could have been more attractive. As spring began to make itself felt in the Kashmir Vale, cowherds allowed a breath of fresh air to cattle which had spent the winter standing in the lower storey of a house, their sides touching, while the owner and his family, with earthenware pots filled with smouldering leaves held to their middles for extra comfort, lived in the warmth above; and the eyes of the Kashmiris were on the mulberry trees which, pollarded like willows, grew everywhere in the Vale. For perhaps a month men and women had been going about with little packets of silkworm eggs in their arm-pits. Each year it was a gamble whether the eggs would hatch out just at the time when the fresh leaves of the mulberry trees would be in the state which best suits the digestion of a baby silk-worm. If the eggs hatched too early, the babies would starve and, if the eggs hatched too late, the leaves would be too strong meat for infants. The eggs, imported from Italy, had been provided by the State. Soon great quantities of cocoons would be brought to the factory in Srinagar to be spun. The cocoons would end up as food for brown trout in the State hatcheries.


Then, with the coming of summer, giant red tulips bloomed on temple roofs; the pistils and stamens of the saffron crocus were harvested; the irises of the graveyards and the wild roses of the countryside and the buds of fruit trees burst into flower.

The strawberries in the Residency garden at Srinagar were at their best when a telegram arrived from Simla. It began with a polite enquiry whether I wished to be considered for appointment as Counsellor of the British Legation at Kabul. This was a formula, service in Afghanistan being voluntary. In the next sentence I was



# V. NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE



 Civil Districts (as distinct from the Political Agencies to the West)



## KABUL

instructed in definite terms to be at Rawalpindi two days later to join Sir Francis Humphrys, the British Minister, who would be on his way from Simla to Kabul. From now on I shall be calling him F. H.

At Peshawar we stayed with Norman Bolton, formerly my chief as Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar and now Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province.

The best book on Afghanistan is Kerr Fraser-Tytler's 'Afghanistan'. The constant aim of British policy in regard to Afghanistan was to maintain the country as a strong buffer state between India and Russia. The chief difficulty in carrying this policy into effect was the existence and attitude of the Pathan tribesmen who occupied territories on both sides of the Durand Line. Of these the most important in the opinion of many competent judges were the Afridis who, on the Indian side of the Durand Line, occupied the areas around the Khyber Pass and the Tirah. Of them F. H., who had recently been Political Agent, Khyber, had special knowledge.

Having motored through the Khyber Pass and reached the Afghan frontier at Dacca, we spent the night at Jalalabad as the guests of the British Vice-Consul, Mahmud Shah. It was for the defence of Jalalabad during the First Afghan War that the Somerset Light Infantry were awarded the emblem of the Mural Crown. From Jalalabad the road track ran past Nimla, with its great cedar trees; on through hard, bare hills, where the retreating rabble of 1841 had met with final disaster; then down into the Kabul plain; and, passing between the city of Kabul and the fort of the Bala Hissar, where Cavagnari and his devoted escort of Guides had been murdered in 1879, to the British Legation where we were welcomed by Lady Humphrys. Her father, Sir Harold Deane, had been appointed Chief Commissioner of the North-West Frontier Province when it was separated from the Punjab.

Until recently, it was the practice to restrict the title of Ambassador to the heads of diplomatic missions appointed by, and to, the leading Powers. Consequently the foreign representatives in Kabul were Ministers in charge of Legations. The Italian Legation was close to the British Legation. Farther off, on the outskirts of Kabul, were the Russian, French, German, Turkish and Persian Legations.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

The British Legation was established in mud-walled single-storied buildings, set round two courtyards, which had formerly been the residence of the ladies of the Harem of Amir Habibullah. The staff included, during most of the time that I was in Kabul, George Kirkbride, and later Duncan Best, as Secretary; Sheikh Mahbub Ali as Oriental Secretary; Percy Dodd as Military Attaché; Harold Thorburn as Doctor; Harold Carter as personal secretary to F. H.; Scott as Superintendent of the Chancery; Stranger in charge of the garage; a mounted escort of about a dozen Indian cavalry and half a dozen Indian clerks. Lionel Amps was Engineer of a new Legation building which was being built on the edge of open country. F. H. had been Minister since 1922. He was hoping to spend some months in England during the summer of 1927 and there was the prospect that during his absence I might act as *chargé d'affaires*.

To judge from what I was able to gather from various sources, it appeared that King Amanulla, then thirty-four years of age, had on the whole made a good start. His excitable temperament and inexperience were compensated in considerable degree by his intense and manifest love for his country, by the fidelity of his relations, many of whom held important offices of state, and by the influence of Queen Souriya. The daughter of Sardar Mahmud Tarzi, at that time Afghan Minister in Paris, she represented the Kandahar branch of the Durrani clan which had in the past been the chief rival of the Kabul branch. The Durrani were of Persian origin. A serious tribal rebellion in Khost, south-west of Kabul, had caused grave anxiety, but by Afghan standards the country as a whole had been comparatively quiet.

As opportunities occurred for getting to know the chiefs and staffs of the other Legations, it seemed to me that the new regime in Afghanistan enjoyed their good-will. France and Italy desired peace in the world, a large number of Germans were employed by the Afghan Government, and to Persia and Turkey the advance of Afghanistan would be a matter of satisfaction. Russia, as it seemed to me, realized that, whatever might be her ultimate designs, the time to make trouble in Afghanistan was as yet far off.

In the autumn I went to Kashmir to fetch up Lorraine; but not Dick and Bob, for whom there was no room in the Legation. Lorraine had had her full share of the pleasures of Srinagar and



Gulmarg, which had included some good sailing on the Wular Lake, and was looking forward to Kabul. Her one regret was that she must leave behind the best horse we ever owned—a three-quarter thoroughbred mare from the Sargodha canal colony in the Punjab. We had been able to buy her because she did not seem to be likely to produce a foal. There was a Legation rule against riding mares in a country full of aggressive stallions.

At Peshawar on the way back I had spent a night in a room which hummed with mosquitos. Malaria came on a fortnight later. I had been asked to revise the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' article on the recent history of Afghanistan and was in bed, surrounded by books, trying to make out why there need ever have been a First Afghan War, or a Second, and whether the Third really deserved to rank as a War at all. Suddenly the electric light flickered and there were shouts. Then there was a column of bright light and a roar. Part of the Legation near the main gate was on fire.

I have seen some big fires, but this was the biggest. The wooden roofs of the buildings were tinder-dry, little water was available and little could be done. The flames spread round one courtyard and then involved the other. The horses were got away and we salvaged as much as we could of the Chancery records and of our own belongings. Seeing that the fire was nearing our only obvious way of escape, I started to explore and after a time found a small back door which led on to the road through a room which was used as our wine cellar. The door was battered down and it was through it that in the end most of us escaped. The Italian Minister took in as many of us as he could for the rest of the night. Next day we moved to the new Legation. The main building was not likely to be finished for another two years, but several of the smaller houses and the Chancery and the hospital were habitable.

On Saturday nights and into the early hours of Sunday there would be high-speed work to get despatches off by courier, in time, after a two hundred mile journey by motor lorry to Peshawar, to catch the P. & O. mail steamer at Bombay. F. H. would dictate letter after letter to Carter, who seemed to be able at any hour of the day or night to produce flawless typescript in minimum time. But Sundays were days of rest. In winter we would start off before dawn by Legation lorry to shoot duck flying along the Kabul river. The Charasiah plain, where Lord Roberts



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

had fought in 1879 the decisive action which made him master of Kabul, and the hills round it, were good places for snipe and chikor. A spinney or orchard might hold woodcock. Or, when snow had fallen, we might go out along the road beyond Charasiah or towards Charikar for skiing. In summer, when there was no shooting to be done, we would take things more easily, with a large lunch basket and perhaps a rod; but I do not remember much success with the fish. Some years later it was discovered that fine trout, almost identical with the brown trout of Europe, were to be had in the upper waters of rivers which drain into the Oxus and the sea of Azov.

For the new Legation F. H. had secured a site of some twenty-five acres, two and a half miles out of Kabul city. Protected from northerly winds by the bare stony slopes of the Asmai ridge, it lay between the road to Charikar and northern Afghanistan and a large grassy plain. Across the Asmai ridge, five miles away, lay Dar ul Aman, where Amanulla was seeking to establish a new official Capital, somewhat on the lines of New Delhi. Dar ul Aman meant the Gateway of Peace and the name fitted in with Amanulla, the Peace of God. King Amanulla might have preferred that the British Legation should be built out by Dar ul Aman; but it would have been difficult to secure a large site there; the future success of the new capital was uncertain; and there were advantages in locating the Legation in comparatively open country.

In the spring of 1927 F. H. and Lady H. went off to England. I became *chargé d'affaires* and Tom Wickham, who had been Legation Secretary, came in as Counsellor. It was obvious that, while F. H. was away, our job in Kabul would be not to attempt to set the Kabul river on fire, and to do all we could to help Lionel Amps to complete the building of the Legation. There was also work to be done in the garden. This, partly in order to make irrigation easier, had been laid out in a series of broad terraces in which lawns were to be main features. But, as care had not been taken to save up the original surface soil, it seemed doubtful whether the large quantity of grass seed which had been sent out by Sutton's would take well. It was less difficult to provide for a fine collection of roses which Lady H. had ordered from Cant's, for a foundation stock of narcissus and iris and peony which I ordered from Barr's, and for fruit trees, I think from Rivers'. I enjoyed work



## KABUL

with the gardeners who, having their homes mostly in the Charikar direction, spoke Persian. The head man, and the men I put in charge of definite kinds of work or sections of the garden, were paid a monthly fee in addition to a daily wage, the rest of the permanent staff being paid a daily wage only. This creation of a sort of non-commissioned officer class worked well and was destined to prove useful on an important occasion.

I enjoyed interviews with Ghulam Sadiq, the Afghan Foreign Minister. If a little blunt at times, he had the great merit of being forthright. The heads of the foreign Legations were hospitable, and considerate, as diplomats *de carrière*, to a junior colleague who was a beginner. In particular M. Feit, the French Minister, so far from scorning my French which was much inferior to his English, said more than once that he was struck by the fact that, wherever British officers served, they learned, and could speak, the languages of the peoples with whom they had to deal. I gathered that this was not the usual practice in the overseas possessions of some European countries.

One day a French lady who was the Court dressmaker called on Lorraine and I was summoned. It appeared that discussion had taken place in Palace circles as to the proper style of morning dress and I was asked to produce my tail-coat outfit.

The Afghan War of Independence—the Third Afghan War, in which militarily Afghanistan had been entirely unsuccessful—was commemorated in Kabul by a statue of Liberty. From the hands of Liberty chains led to the mouths of four lazy-looking lions. Whether these lions were intended to be in any way suggestive of the British lion was left to the imagination. When in summer the temperature at Kabul, which in winter might have fallen to zero Fahrenheit, rose to the 90's, it was the custom of the Court to retire for a few weeks to the hills of Paghman, some twenty miles to the north-west. Here every summer King Amanulla staged an Independence Festival. The chief event was a parade of all arms with, as a central feature, a march past of boys in flowing red cloaks, orphans of the Third Afghan War. There were also an agricultural show and entertainments of many kinds. I remember Percy Dodd, who was sitting next to me close to the stage at a variety and acrobatic performance, becoming more and more hot and bothered when an attractive European girl, lightly clad, bent



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

over backwards until her head reappeared between her legs, and proceeded to make eyes at him. There was a cricket match in which the British Legation played against the world. But where we came off best was in the clay pigeon shooting. King Amanulla was a keen and good shot. Because we often went out shooting, we were invited to compete. The rest of the diplomatic corps and all the *élite* of Kabul were seated, tier above tier, on a grandstand, from the roof of which the clay pigeons were thrown. None of them dared to flinch. Happily there were no casualties.

In the late summer of 1927 a bomb-shell exploded. The visit of the Court dressmaker was explained. The Foreign Minister asked me to call on him. He said that King Amanulla had decided to visit Europe, Turkey and Persia. There was no more peace. Telegrams began to fly. Various nations were anxious that theirs should be the first country to be visited. I could not see what they would be likely to gain by this. Possibly last impressions would be the most enduring. But F. H. was due back from leave shortly and then such matters would be out of my hands. Soon after he had arrived, Lorraine and I and the children—who had come up to Kabul in the spring with Violet Pulford—went off to fish in Kashmir for a few days. For this I liked September best. The days were the right length and, whereas in the hot weather the best times for fishing were very early in the morning or late in the evening, in September the trout were usually on the move between about ten and five. We had rods on the Bringhi and did moderately well.

In December, 1927, King Amanulla with Queen Souriya and their suite set off on their travels. They went by road to Kandahar and Chaman and on by train through Quetta to Karachi. From Chaman the railway enters a long steep tunnel under the Khojak Pass. The party being a large one, the train had three engines. One of the King's suite, wanting to see how everything worked, set to work to pull everything that could be pulled, including the communication cord which he pulled when the train was halfway through the tunnel. It was by what railway men afterwards said must have been something of a miracle that vacuum was restored and the train was again got on the move before the party was asphyxiated.

F. H. and Lady H. went off to be ready to receive King Ama-



## KABUL

nulla and Queen Souriya in England and I was again left in charge. Tom Wickham was wanted for work in connection with the tour and Kerr Fraser-Tytler came to Kabul as Counsellor, bringing with him his wife Eila. Sardar Mahomed Wali, a near relation and loyal supporter of the King, was to act as Regent during his absence. Now, even more than during the preceding summer, it was a case of sitting down to do nothing gracefully beyond keeping one's ears open and helping the Legation building and the garden to grow. Lorraine and I had many good rides on the wide Wazirabad plain and became familiar with the scenes of historic tragedies. Some garden problems had been solved by the discovery that the best way to make grass grow on newly-levelled ground was to take a crop of annual clover first, and that such things as peas, which need a longer growing period than the short interval between a Kabul winter and the hot weather, and strawberries, stand an Afghan winter best if they are planted on the north side of east-west ridges. We had come across a local frost-proof lettuce of Cos type of which I sent off seed to Sutton's. Beyond the limits of the garden, there was the charm of small, very deep-rooted tulips in spring, and of dark red and yellow wild roses, and tall spikes of golden *eremurus*, in summer. Good reports came in of the visit to Europe. Many were glad and proud that the King of Afghanistan was making his country better known to the world. With Mahomed Wali at the helm, the ship of state seemed to be in safe hands.

There is nothing I dislike more than writing reports when there is nothing particular to write about. But Kerr F.-T. was firm in insisting that one could not carry on for ever on the principle that no news was good news. So one night, fortified with a drink or two, I sat down to write a despatch to the London Foreign Office. A simultaneous copy would go to Simla.

The gist, so far as I remember it, was that I had been in frequent and close touch with the Regent and other Afghans who mattered and that all seemed to be quiet. As a hedge, or to fill up space, I added that history had shown that Afghanistan was a country where at any time a little cloud, like a man's hand, might arise and soon the whole sky would be overcast.

About this time I met several times a young Secretary recently appointed to the Italian Legation. He was full of ideas and talk,



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

then strange to my ears, about a political creed called Fascism. He reminded me that in the days of ancient Rome a bundle of rods, the fasces, with an axe in the middle, had been borne before a magistrate of high grade. It appeared that Fascism stood for discipline, as represented by the axe, and for the principle that Unity is Strength, as represented by the bundle of sticks.

After visiting Italy, France, England and other countries, King Amanulla and Queen Souriya returned to Kabul in the autumn via Russia, Turkey and Persia. There were strange reports that Queen Souriya and her ladies had appeared in public in the Crimea unveiled. F. H. having returned via India, I reverted to the post of Counsellor. F. H. was well pleased at the work Lionel Amps had managed to get done and at being able to enter into full occupation of the new Legation. Actually, as events were to show, the Legation had been finished just in time.

In leaving his country for several months, King Amanulla had taken a risk, but he had brought it off. What he ought to have done now was to give his people opportunities of welcoming him back, to acknowledge their loyalty during his absence by some small acts of generosity and, if he had in mind ideas for the advancement of Afghanistan, to be prudent and patient. But his head had been turned by what he had seen in Russia and Turkey and Persia and he seemed to think that what had been accomplished in the course of years by Mustafa Kemal in Turkey, and by Reza Shah in Persia, could be done in a very short time by Amanulla in Afghanistan. From what I saw of him on several occasions I judged him to be a highly strung man suffering from nervous exhaustion. If only he could have had some slight illness and a rest, all might have been well. But his exhaustion took the form of ceaseless and unreflecting activity.

Film shows had until then been unknown in Kabul. More than one Minister was confident of having stolen a march on his colleagues by arranging for a ciné record of the King's visit to his country. In some of these Queen Souriya and her ladies appeared unveiled. Amanulla's visit to Portsmouth had taken place on a dark and stormy day and our film showed a single modern warship, with a single funnel which emitted very little smoke, rising and falling with the waves. This was generally considered to be a feeble performance in comparison with the Russian film which



## KABUL

showed several obsolete warships, motionless on the water, each belching out clouds of thick smoke from several funnels.

A story, true or false, was current that in a house in a suburb of Kabul a man and his wife had been standing at an upper window. She, having heard talk of the equality of women with men in other countries, had said, "I am as good as you now." "Certainly," the man had replied and had pitched her out of the window, so that she broke her neck.

Amanulla summoned to Kabul a Great Assembly of tribesmen and others from far and wide. To mark the beginning of a new era in Afghanistan, he ordained a new official dress for the occasion—a seedy black frock-coat and black trousers. This is not a good or comfortable kit for men who are used to loose clothes and who sit or squat on the ground more often than they sit in chairs. Moreover the mullas, who had very great influence amongst the tribesmen, knew that their influence was rooted in the past and disliked innovations of any kind.

The Great Assembly proved to be an occasion not for deliberation or for the King to re-establish touch with his people, but for a harangue in which the King went on and on, and on and on, for three days. Time after time an audience, most of which became more and more bored, was told that Afghanistan must wake up and take to the ways of the countries of the West.

The Shinwaris, neighbours of the Afridis, occupy an area between Jalalabad and the Indian frontier. In November they gave trouble, held up trade on the Khyber-Kabul route and besieged Jalalabad. Sardar Mahomed Wali set out from Kabul to deal with them and took with him most of the Kabul garrison.

Reports had for some time been reaching Kabul about a bandit called Bacha Saqao, 'The Water-carrier's Brat'. He was said to be a sort of Robin Hood who, in the country north of Kabul towards the Hindu Kush, was robbing the rich but sparing and even helping the poor. On the afternoon of December 14th I was working in the Chancery when I received a message from F. H. I was to close the Chancery and bring Lorraine and the children to the Legation. Arrived there, I saw F. H. standing under a Union Jack at the main gate. He was explaining, tactfully but firmly, that the Legation was British soil and that nobody could be admitted.

The men he was addressing were representatives of a rabble of



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

a few hundred men, poorly armed and poorly clothed, whom Bacha had raised and induced to march with him on Kabul. Probably a handful of disciplined troops could have stopped them. But most of the Army had gone off with Mahomed Wali to deal with the Shinwaris; and Kabul was unprepared. Bacha and his men swept past the Legation and were in the outskirts of Kabul city before they were held up by a scratch force hurriedly got together.

Above the Legation rose the bare rocky slopes of the Asmai hill. Here, at a distance of a few hundred yards from us, for several days small parties of Amanulla's and of Bacha Saqao's men advanced, fought and retired. It seemed that at any time during those days a hundred determined and well-led men on either side could have cleared the slopes. Such action would probably have been decisive, for or against Bacha. But neither side seemed to have its heart in the fight and casualties appeared to be very few.

Not far from the Legation, at the junction of the roads towards northern Afghanistan and to Paghman, was the Bagh i Bala or Upper Garden. This was a hillside vineyard in which stood a strongly built house. Bacha made the house his headquarters and the Afghan Army, which had a few biplanes, tried to bomb the place. The Afghan pilots made their runs over the Legation. As they had had little practice in bombing, we hoped, almost against hope, that they would be reasonably accurate in their aim.

After a few days the fighting became static. On our side of the city Amanulla's men had established themselves on a line which included a mud-walled building which overlooked the Chancery from the west, while Bacha was in occupation of a small village with high walls which overlooked our escort lines and the stables and garage. All that separated the opponents was the twenty-five acres occupied by the grounds and buildings of the British Legation. With a view to avoiding complications, our main business was to keep our area clear of opponents and not to be hit.

Besides their aircraft, the Afghan army had still in Kabul a few mountain guns and light field guns. The guns, which had been supplied from India, were good, but the gunners were unpractised and a number of 'shorts' hit our buildings or fell in the garden. A large gap was made in the wall of what had been Dick's and Bob's nursery; and our cook was indignant at finding what had been his





Bacha Saqao's followers entering Kabul

On the Kabul aerodrome



Armed villagers of the  
Kurram Valley









## KABUL

kitchen occupied by a corpse. At the Legation we were being spoiled by Lady Humphrys, who never turned a hair. Most of us spent our time cyphering and re-cyphering long telegrams. Coming down to tea one evening, I found the children playing at tents under the billiard table, which gave protection from possible splinters. Dick crawled out and caught hold of me and said, "Come over here, Daddy; you can hear the bangs much better this side!"

A shell hit the Military Attaché's house, which caught fire, and the flames roared up five hundred feet into the air. Borne on a southerly wind, the flying embers threatened to set fire to several hundred tons of dry firewood and to the petrol store. Then the wind changed and all was well.

During a lull in the fighting the Afghan Foreign Minister sent two officers to make polite enquiries. A few stray shots were still being fired across the garden. As our visitors seemed to think that we had not had much to put up with, I suggested that they might care to come into the garden to inspect some of the damage. The offer was declined with thanks. They preferred a cup of tea.

There were rumours that King Amanulla might decide to withdraw to Kandahar. He had in his service two Junker monoplanes with German pilots. We were in touch with the pilots who promised that when the time came they would, when airborne, fire a green Very light if Amanulla was on board and a red Very light if Queen Souriya was on board. A little before dawn on December 21st I happened to wake and heard the sound of a Junker tuning up. In order to be able to see the promised signals I went to the highest room in the Legation, which looked out over the Chancery towards the city and aerodrome. It was one of the observation posts from which we watched, to make sure that the area of the British Legation was not invaded by combatants. To get a better view through glasses I opened the window a few inches at the bottom and then sat well back so that I could just see over the window frame. Soon a Junker was airborne and a red Very light was fired. Queen Souriya had left by air. But I stayed there a little too long. Afghans are apt to be trigger-happy. An Afghan soldier stationed in the building which overlooked the Chancery let off a shot. It hit the teak window frame and hundreds of little splinters drew blood from my face and scalp. The glasses saved my eyes.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

After tidying up as much as possible, I told the children at breakfast that I had cut myself shaving. When F. H. saw the damage he was reproachful. He was glad to have obtained the news; but our business was NOT (repeat NOT) to be hit.

Two mornings later I noticed Scott, the Superintendent of the Chancery, looking fit and happy, but walking with a limp. He said he had had a bullet through the flesh of the thigh, "But please don't on any account let Sir Francis know." Actually, of course, F. H. had heard of the incident already.

Even before Bacha's advance on Kabul, F. H., having in mind the disasters of 1841 and 1879, had advised that provisional arrangements should be made in India for removing women and children by air. The telegraph lines between Kabul and India having already been cut, on December 17th the Afghan wireless also failed, in the middle of transmitting a message in which F. H. said that he wanted to evacuate the women and children of the British Legation as soon as possible.

On December 22nd Bacha withdrew temporarily from Kabul. The Royal Air Force had made prompt arrangements which included the dropping of a wireless set. Immediate advantage was taken of the lull. Snow had fallen. Through it, long before dawn on Sunday, December 23rd, a party of women and children headed by F. H. stole out from the Legation. Silence had been ordered. Bandits might be on the roam. It was barely light when I saw a Wapiti, a troop-carrying Victoria and three D.H.9A.s approach from the direction of Peshawar. After a long pause I heard the engines start up again. The Victoria had a heavy load and for some time I doubted whether it had taken off successfully. It seemed a long time before we learned, through our recently imported wireless, that our twenty-three women and children had reached Peshawar safely. In case some of our telegraphic reports should have failed to reach Delhi and London, or should have been mutilated in transmission, Lorraine had taken with her, intimately concealed, many pages of thin paper which contained copies.

*The Times* of Christmas Eve celebrated the event in a leading article 'Perseus Crosses the Khyber'. By New Year's Day, in spite of interruptions due to bad weather, more than 130 women and children, British, Indian, French, Italian, German, Turk and Syrian, had reached Peshawar.



## KABUL

On January 10th Bacha again advanced on Kabul. On January 14th Amanulla abdicated in favour of his brother Inayatullah and left by road for Kandahar. That night Bacha captured the city and surrounded the Palace. On January 16th he proclaimed himself Amir. The next day Inayatullah abdicated. With Bacha's consent, and reassured by F. H.'s personal guarantee of their safety on the way to the aerodrome, he and his whole family were evacuated by air to Peshawar on January 18th. The probability of a massacre which might have involved the destruction of the city and of all the Legations had been averted.

F. H. and his trusted helper, Sheikh Mahbub Ali, the Oriental Secretary, never displayed greater ability than in getting the foreign Legations, including the Russians, and Bacha (who had now assumed the name of Amir Habibulla), to agree fully on two points. One was that the Afghans should be left perfectly free to settle their own affairs. The other was that every foreigner should be helped, if he so desired, to leave Afghanistan and that the Legations should be withdrawn. The Government of India organized a fleet of Victorias, some of which were supplied from Iraq. Between February 1st and 20th, in spite of bad weather, more than 300 British subjects and foreigners were evacuated by air.

It was in connection with some detail of evacuation arrangements that one day, with Sheikh Mahbub Ali, I visited the Afghan Foreign Office. We were about to leave the building when we were asked to stand to one side. Along the passage came a thick-set, broad-browed, middle-aged man. With a firm, strong, hard hand he greeted me and said a few polite words in Persian. It was Bacha Saqao. He was destined to rule, according to his lights, until General Nadir Khan, entering Afghanistan from India via Khost, raised the tribesmen, out-generaled and out-fought Bacha and put him to death. For Bacha's 'True Life Story' see 'From Brigand to King' (Sampson Low).

The Russian Legation made their own arrangements for evacuating themselves and the Turkish Legation northwards. It was decided that such members of the staffs of the other Legations as had not already been evacuated should leave as soon as possible—the British last of all. The spring is the season when all along the Afghan frontier the weather is most apt to be broken. The sky became overcast and snow began to fall, at first lightly and then



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

heavily. Reports from the weather authorities in India said that more and heavier snow was to be expected in a few days.

F. H. told me to get a runway cleared on the aerodrome. It must be seven hundred yards long and reasonably broad. So I set out with the garden staff of the Legation and with their help collected several hundred workmen. They were getting along nicely with broad long-handled winnowing shovels and every sort of tool that could be collected when an Afghan officer came up. He said it was his aerodrome and the work was being done without his authority. But there did not seem to be much bite in his words. Our men had been promised good pay and, after a quiet talk, he agreed that the best solution would be that he should take on, with his own men and at the same rates, another three hundred yards of clearance. In the hurry of the morning I had forgotten to take glare glasses with me and after a full day's work in snow and strong sunlight my eyes were sore.

The lower wings of the Victorias had only a few feet of clearance from the ground, but on looking round on the following morning it was obvious that it would take several days to clear a runway as broad as their wing span. So the only thing to do, with more snow forecast, was to clear the snow down to ground level for the wheels of the aircraft and to trample down the banks of snow which we had thrown up at the sides of the wheel track. The pilots might not like so little clearance for the wings, but it was the best we could do. By the evening of the second day a narrow runway a thousand yards long had been cleared in the direction of such wind as there was at the time. If it changed, we should be stuck.

The French and Italian Legations were got away. Then it was our turn. On February 25th before dawn we lined up in the snow in seven little groups, expecting the Victorias as soon as they could see to land. Snow was again falling and, according to the weather reports, much more was to be expected. This, as we learned later, was an accurate forecast. F. H.'s last act on leaving the Legation had been to wrap round his waist, under his coat, the flag which had flown over the building. We were seen off by a diminutive Pathan clerk who had volunteered to stay behind as caretaker.

As we gained height over the passes where so many thousands had been frozen to death or massacred by tribesmen during the



## KABUL

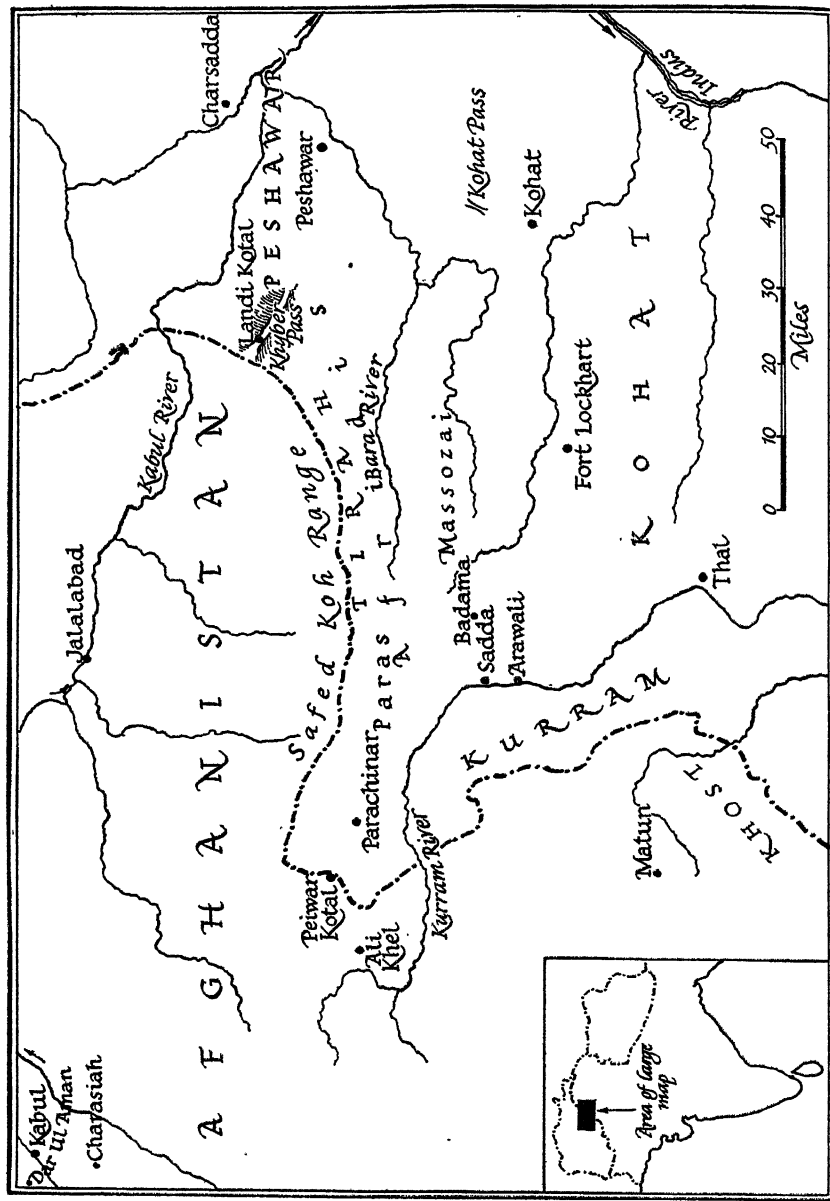
retreat of 1841, the air became bitterly cold. Two hours later we were circling down towards the Peshawar aerodrome through warmer and warmer layers of air. Even so Norman and Ethel Bolton and the others who had come to welcome us were wearing thick sheepskin coats.

I was half snow-blind. I sneezed and sneezed, my eyes streamed and streamed, and I could see little for several days. I was given leave to England, said good-bye to F. H. at Peshawar and joined Lorraine and Dick and Bob at Jaipur, where they had been staying with Norman Cater in his lovely Residency.

I often find myself thinking of F. H. in terms of cricket. He had been captain of the XI at Shrewsbury and it seemed that cricket had become part of his nature. Amongst cricketers, I think he took after W. G. Grace, whom I had watched in my youth. The better the cricketer, the more he loves the game, plays in the spirit of the game, plays to win and succeeds in winning, but enjoys a closely-fought match and, as a captain, finds as much happiness in the success of others as in his own.



# VI KURRAM VALLEY





## VIII

### *Political Agent, Kurram*

1929-30

IT is a solemn thing to look back along the vista of the years and to realize how few things one has done, or has even seen done, which were good in every way. But there is one act, thorough, good, fine and resolute, to which I look back with no tinge of regret and to which I owed my appointment to the Kurram. As the day when we must leave the British Legation at Kabul drew near, F. H. decided that all the secret archives of the Chancery, which were too bulky to be taken back to India by air, must be destroyed. They made a fine blaze. Then he sanctioned the burning of any records that were unimportant; and that made another fine blaze. Finally he agreed to my burning all the rest, and that was that. When, late in 1929, it became apparent that it might soon become possible to re-establish the Legation, it was realized that it would be difficult to start again from scratch, with no records of what had been thought and decided and done in the past. Roy Maconachie had been Counsellor at Kabul and was then Political Agent in the Kurram. The Kurram vacancy was due to his having been called to Delhi to prepare a précis of all that was of importance in the papers which had been destroyed. He did this so well that many must have wished that they could arrange to have a similar holocaust in their offices every few years.

The Kurram valley was shaped like a droopy mushroom lying on its side. At the base of the stem was Thal, a one battalion post at the south-western end of the Kohat District. Parachinar, the headquarters of the Kurram Political Agency, was at the top of the stem. To the south-west of the stem lay the Afghan frontier district of Khost; the Kurram river broke in from Afghanistan through the westerly edge of the crown; and the dome of the crown was the range of the Safed Koh. Where the crown drooped to the south-east were tribes, allied to the Afridis, for whose



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

behaviour towards the people of the Kurram the P. A. Kurram was responsible. Beyond them lay the Tirah. This was the catchment area of the Bara river, the home of the Afridis who, taken by and large, were the toughest tribe of the whole frontier. Their territory included the Khyber Pass above Peshawar where, across the Kabul river, their neighbours were the Mohmands. On the south the Tirah extended to the frontier hills of the Kohat District.

Between the Kurram and the Indus lay the Bannu District. The Sikhs had never succeeded in bringing it under control but in the short time between the second Sikh war and the Mutiny it was coaxed into peace and prosperity by Herbert Edwardes. To the south lay Waziristan, the home of the Mahsuds, and of the Wazirs whose tribal lands extended across the Durand Line into Afghanistan.

Nothing was more fascinating about the North-West Frontier than its infinite variety. At bottom the policy of Government was to encourage the tribesmen and, in the less democratic areas, the local rulers such as the Mehtar of Chitral and the Wali of Swat, to carry on with a minimum of interference on the part of Government. In each area the pursuance of this ideal posed a different problem.

During the years that I had been away in Persia a big issue had been fought out and had, in the opinion of many of my friends in the Political, been decided against the side which had the better cause. During the third Afghan War of 1919 a stupid and lamentable incident had brought on hostilities, long drawn out and extremely expensive both in lives and in money, with the Mahsuds and Wazirs of Waziristan. One school of thought, in which the Army were predominant, held that any recurrence of serious trouble in Waziristan could best be prevented by occupying the country with regular troops. Weak or blind spots in this policy were that neither money nor troops could be made available on a scale sufficient to occupy Waziristan up to the Durand Line and that, unless this could be done, it would be neither possible nor just to disarm the Wazirs and Mahsuds, who would be open to attack by tribesmen from across the Durand Line. The other school of thought held that the incomplete occupation of Waziristan would not only be costly, but would inevitably prove to be inadequate to secure the peace of the frontier and to prevent com-



## POLITICAL AGENT, KURRAM

plications with Afghanistan; that it was only in the event of trouble with the Afridis of the Tirah and Khyber, which might be the signal for the Mahsuds and Wazirs also to rise, that the position on the frontier as a whole might be expected to become critical; that, if the Army became permanently tied up in Waziristan, it would be handicapped for dealing with the Afridis, with whom the Mohmands might combine; and therefore that, if the frontier problem was to be tackled boldly, the prime need was to make sure of being able to control the Afridis. If they could be controlled, even a simultaneous rising of the Mahsuds and Wazirs, and also of the Mohmands, need cause no great alarm. It was the school which favoured the military occupation of Waziristan that won.

The most important inhabitants of the Kurram were the Turis. Unlike their Pathan neighbours on all sides, who were Sunni by religion, most of the Turis, who claimed to be of different ancestry, were Shiah. The Kurram was a Shiah island surrounded by an ocean of Sunnis. As a result, the people of the Kurram looked towards Government not as the usurper of any liberties they might have enjoyed in the past, but as their protector from potential enemies. The form of political control in the valley was a compromise between that of the Districts and the methods in vogue in regard to purely tribal areas. The people were required to pay a light land revenue to Government, but were encouraged to take an important part in the conduct of their affairs.

The system of local defence in force in the Kurram was the Kurram Militia of some 1,200 men and the issue of rifles to trustworthy villagers.

The predecessor of Roy Maconachie whom I relieved had been Edward Noel. I had heard of him through official Afghan reports when I was in Kabul as a wicked man who had trailed his coat along the Kurram-Afghan frontier and so drawn the fire of Afghan frontier guards. Later, from what I heard and saw of his work in the Kurram and elsewhere, I came to think of him more than of any other man I know in terms of Tennyson's Ulysses. Wherever he served he became a name; always roaming with a hungry heart, much had he seen and known; he was a part of all that he had met; it was impossible to imagine that while life lasted he would ever be content to rust unburnished, not to shine in use.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

During his two years in the Kurram he had introduced imported bees (which succumbed to a smaller and more aggressive local variety); trout (for which the local waters were rather too warm and too muddy when in flood but which gave me my first experience in raising trout); English fowls (which had induced the local breeds to produce larger eggs); fruits of various kinds, especially the biggest and best seedless oranges I have ever eaten; and various kinds of vegetables. He had also been the first to experiment in the dry land which lay between Parachinar and the Peiwar Kotal with the Persian *karez* system of irrigation. From one of these *karezes* he reckoned to work a Pelton wheel to supply Parachinar with electric current. Being cautious for once, he got his scheme checked over by an engineer, who said it would not work; but he was not convinced by the engineer's figures and opinion, went over the scheme again by himself, carried it into effect and achieved complete success. His star performance was when, as the result of having kept his eyes open when in southern Russia, he found in a tract of rough herby pasture (which was, the shepherds told him, very good for the health of their sheep) acres of a low shrub which looked like the Old Man of English gardens. Recognizing this as *artemisia*, and suspecting that it might be *artemisia maritima* which is the specific for round worm and was then in great demand owing to failure of supplies from the Russian steppes, he had the local product tested for *santonin* content and found that he had located the genuine article. The result of shipping this on behalf of the people of the Kurram to Messrs. T. & J. Smith of Glasgow was that the income from this one source was more than enough to meet the whole of the government land revenue demand in the valley. Probably also it was he who had introduced asparagus, which grew semi-wild and not only was extremely good to eat but lasted from April till October.

The almost invariable practice in the Kurram, even more than in Charsadda, was to entrust the finding on the facts of a case to a *jirga* and to bring about reconciliation when possible. My usual court-room was the shade of a great *chenar* tree. Not all cases were of a kind for which an English court would be able to find precedents. There was a beautiful maiden—so their female relations told them—whom two young men who were friends both wanted to marry. Not wishing to quarrel over her, they agreed to settle



## POLITICAL AGENT, KURRAM

the matter by a trial of strength, skill and nerve. There was a tall tree in their village and they decided that whoever succeeded in climbing highest up the tree should be held to be the winner. So far so good; but then there arose the question of the bride-price to be paid. The normal price being about £100, the father of the girl claimed more on the grounds that a girl for whom two friends would run such risks must be, and indeed was, no ordinary girl and therefore the price should be higher. No, replied the father of the successful suitor, the girl and her beauty had become subjects of public comment and that debased her value. It was for the lower value that the Jirga found and that I made out the decree.

To be of any use as a Political Agent, the first need was to get to know the people—especially the leading men in the villages and in the Kurram Militia—and to be known by them. This could be done informally and delightfully in the course of following up some of Edward Noel's activities. A visit to the trout ponds down by the river brought us close to the home of one of the most influential khans. He always seemed pleased to produce a cup of tea, and home-made fare in the form of rings freshly fried in butter, or chapatti and curried chicken, or the thicker unleavened bread called *dodai*, baked on the inside of a big earthenware jar like a rhubarb pot heated with dried camel-thorn, or *kak* which is whole-meal flour wrapped round a stone and cooked in warm ashes. At such parties Lorraine, who loved them, found herself the subject of some astonishment. In the languages of northern India, as indeed in English also, there are some words of the type napkin, house, and tired, and others of the type serviette, residence, and fatigued, the more elegant word being the one which is both longer and of more remote origin. Lorraine had seen more of Persia, and of Kabul where Persian was spoken, than of India. So when she wanted to say 'you', for which the ordinary polite word was *ap* in Hindustani or *tuse* in Pushtu, she found it more natural to use Persian words which meant 'Your Exalted Excellency'; to her 'very' was not *bahut* but *nihayat* or *fauq ul adha* (which literally means cancellation of the limit); while, contrariwise, 'I' became 'your humble servant' or 'this least of all'. After Persian, which she had enjoyed speaking and had learned to read and to write a little, Hindustani was a matter of coming downstairs.

We had delightful days that cold weather, shooting with the



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Kurram Militia officers up and down the valley and on the fringes of the hills which hem it in. By the river there were snipe and some duck; in fruit gardens there was occasionally the chance of that nerve-racking bird the woodcock; and there were in the drier parts chikor, whose colours are embodied in the tie of the Frontier Corps, and grey partridge, and that delicious portion for one, best eaten cold, the sisi partridge, and hare. It was chilly work in winter, when there might be snow on the ground, starting in time to be in position by dawn. Then lunch in the open, the drive back to Parachinar, and tea in front of a log fire. Our cook, who had been the head man at the Kabul Legation, was pretty good, and no one liked his plum cakes better than a cat which had adopted us.

I had been in the Kurram only a few weeks when Norman Bolton invited us to stay at Government House, Peshawar. A thing which had astonished me when I worked under him in the Peshawar District was the amount he knew about everything that mattered. Whatever subject you had been working up, he knew the facts already and the right answer. Besides this he was a good shot, a good man with a rod after mahseer, and expert both as a gardener and as a motor mechanic. He hated to see a bit of machinery maltreated. One day, when I had come in from Char-sadda on a motor-bike and was dealing not tenderly enough with some adjustment, he had looked on for a time and then said quietly "It's *hikmat*, not *zor* (knack, not force) that does the trick." That, with thoroughness and inspiration, was his method.

When I was on my way to the Kurram, Bolton had told me that possibly I might be left there only a short time. I wanted to find out what the prospects were and, if I was to stay on, there were some points on which I wanted orders. In particular it seemed a pity that the villagers of the Kurram, who were good fighting men and loyal both by inclination and by self-interest, should be equipped for defence against possible attack on several sides with nothing better than Sniders and .450 Martini Henrys and ammunition of old and doubtful vintages. One morning he called me to his study. Luckily I had the points noted on a sheet of paper, otherwise I could not have kept up with him. At the end of a quarter of an hour I asked for a pause, to pull myself together. I told him that the quickest man I had ever had to take on before had been Sardar Mahomed Wali, who had been the head of the



Afghan Government while King Amanulla was on his visit to Europe, but that he had Mahomed Wali beat. In less than an hour I had got a clear answer to each question and the promise of the very early supply for village defence of three thousand ·303 rifles with plenty of ammunition.

Towards the end of March Lorraine went home, to be in touch with the children, leaving me to compete with a visit by the Viceroy, Lord Irwin. But there was no need to worry because I knew that he would wish to see things as they normally were and to live simply. What seemed to interest him most was a visit to the foot of the Peiwar Kotal, where the line of Lord Roberts's advance into Afghanistan in 1878 could be traced.

By this time some of the three thousand rifles had arrived. Competition to secure them was intense. Although their cost to Government was only five to ten pounds each, their current value in Afridi or Afghan country was high and they would be a tempting bait to potential raiders. To guard against this risk I refused to issue them otherwise than to trustworthy men, in batches large enough to deter raiders, and on a personal security, backed by two sureties, of a thousand rupees for each weapon. The stiffness of the conditions seemed to make it all the more a point of honour with villages and their headmen to obtain the rifles; and there was no slackening of demand when, after two rifles had been stolen, the full amount of security was promptly demanded and realized.

Suddenly, a little before midnight on April 24th, I received a telephone message requesting the immediate despatch of two hundred of the Kurram Militia to Peshawar. Within an hour they had been sent off in Militia and bazaar motor lorries. Their prompt arrival in Peshawar Cantonment was greeted with a cry, "The Afridis are on us." All we had known in the Kurram was that for some time there had been an atmosphere of tension in the Peshawar District where, under the influence of Abdul Ghafar, who was in close touch with the Indian Congress, an organization known as the Red Shirts had started on a campaign of civil disobedience, particularly in the matter of the non-payment of land revenue.

The idea that Government was no longer able to govern spread to the Mohmands and the Afridis. Roos-Keppel, who had made his early reputation in the Khyber, had given no clearer proof of



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

his wisdom and ability than in the way he had nursed the Afridis through the Great War and the third Afghan war of 1919. But now the Afridis also became infected with Congress ideas. They committed many raids and set fire to a large supply depot on the outskirts of Peshawar.

When the position in the Peshawar District had been adjusted the two hundred Kurram Militia returned. Within the valley all was quiet enough. The shooting season was over, but there was trout and mahseer fishing to be had; there were schools and fruit gardens to be inspected; and opportunities occurred of visiting Militia posts and of accompanying parties of Militia on some of their patrols. In this way I was able to get to know the lie of the land and many of the Turis without making a fuss. One day two of us were half-way across a shallow reach of the river below Parachinar when there was a rumbling roar and a sour stink and we saw coming down on us a wall of mud-laden water fringed with branches and other rubbish. There had been a sudden heavy storm of rain on the sun-baked hills across the Afghan border. Trout cannot live in very dirty water and the reason why they were not doing better in the main stream was now clear.

Reports from Intelligence in Peshawar gave warning that more trouble was to be expected before long. It appeared that the two hundred Kurram Militia who had been sent to help at Peshawar had attracted a good deal of attention in tribal circles and that, if the Afridis staged hostilities in the direction of Peshawar, the role of the tribes on the borders of the Kurram would be to 'contain' the Kurram Militia and to teach the people of the Kurram to mind their own business. The main danger areas were likely to be on the border opposite Khost in Afghanistan, the actual valley of the Kurram river and the Peiwar Kotal which were the main routes from Afghanistan, and the northern border of the valley towards Tirah. On this side there were several tribes closely related to the Afridis, notably the Paras and Massozai. They lived in difficult and inaccessible country, were well armed, had often committed raids on the Kurram, and, being a nuisance rather than a major danger, had never been properly brought to book.

Sir Steuart Pears had now become Chief Commissioner. I had known him during the war as Political Agent in the Khyber. He had also served as P. A. Kurram, and had been Resident in Wazir-



## POLITICAL AGENT, KURRAM

istan and Chief Political Officer to the G.O.C. during the Waziristan campaign of 1920-23. After that he had for some years been Resident in distant Mysore, where he had constantly refreshed his soul by poring over large-scale maps of the Frontier which he loved. With his encouragement I pushed on with the issue of some 1,500 of the 303 rifles, keeping the rest in reserve for the time being. We also established new Militia posts on the ridge of a sweep of high downs overlooking the Para country, and on a spur which enfiladed the Peiwar. Service in East Persia had driven in the lesson first learned in Charsadda that there is nothing tribesmen dislike so much as any threat to their line of retirement after a raid.

The general plan was that, if the Kurram was attacked, it should try to fend for itself without calling in regular ground troops. There might be no regulars to spare and, if command passed to military hands, it might be difficult to make the best use of the 1,200 Militia and of the 3,000 rifles issued, or available, for civil defence. Above all it would be inadvisable to get regular troops tied up in Para and Massozai country. Supply would be difficult, but the main drawback to operations in tribal territory has always been the problem of withdrawal. These disadvantages would not attach to action from the air. So I was authorized to arrange with Charles Darley, the R.A.F. commander at Kohat, for the whole of the tribal territory which lay between the Kurram and Afridi country to be photographed from the air, and I made the most of opportunities of flying over the area so as to get to know it. The air photos were made up into a large mosaic on which practically every group of houses was identifiable by grid references and named with the help of informers, who also helped in the compilation of a Who's Who of the leading inhabitants. A risk which had to be taken into account was that the Paras might try to isolate the upper part of the valley from Thal and the rest of the N.W.F.P. by cutting the road two-thirds of the way down the valley. Against this risk our main protection was a small Militia post at Badama. Half-way down the valley there was a good unsurfaced landing-ground at Arawali.

The Kurram Militia were commanded by Kenneth Hyde Cates. I was told, but not by him, that he and another man, who was awarded the V.C., had been recommended for that honour, he



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

for hanging on to an impossible position on the Western Front in France, and the other for accomplishing the impossible in bringing up ammunition when two parties, which had tried to do so, had been wiped out. He was not always a polite talker, but you knew where you were with him and so did his men. His second in command was Archie McLaren, 36th Sikhs. Thin as a rake, his brother officers said that when he was at headquarters messing went up several annas a day all round. Frequent visitors were Tiny Grylls—a beefy Rugger forward in his earlier days—who commanded the Indian Infantry battalion at Thal at the bottom of the valley, and Bill Barlow from the same battalion. For ladies the rule was that, if allowed by the Chief Commissioner to visit the Kurram at all, they must be prepared to leave at once if required. Those in Parachinar that summer were Joan Hyde Cates with Betty Gayer as her guest, Connie Grylls, and Helen Barlow with nurse and child.

Towards the end of the hot weather the Afridis again staged attacks in the Peshawar District and the Kurram found that it was to be paid the expected honour of being 'contained'. Tribesmen attacked from Khost past a small Militia post which they invested, down the Kurram river and across the Peiwar. The Paras and their neighbours the Massozai were warned that, unless they kept quiet, they would be dealt with firmly and would be bombed by aircraft. The Turis and other tribes of the Kurram played up splendidly. One village, having lost seven men killed in a night attack on a breastwork not far from where the Kurram river crossed the border, refused point blank to be relieved; and everywhere civilians, unpaid but proud of their arms, hit back hard at their attackers. An important result of this was that it left the Militia free to reinforce their frontier posts and to hang on to them and to scout the country.

Not heeding the repeated warnings they had received, the Paras and Massozai made several heavy raids and invested Badama; so after one more warning I got down to work with Darley and the R.A.F. We were so fortunate as to have been authorized to carry on as we judged best in view of the possibility that communications with Peshawar might be cut at any time. Bill Barlow, who had attached himself to me as an unofficial staff officer, had recently been on a staff course from which he had brought back



ideas about the importance of getting on the enemy's nerves, and we decided to work on that principle. In all frontier operations the main object is to bring tribesmen to their senses with minimum damage to life and property. Our plan therefore was to show that we could hit from the air when we liked, where we liked, and as hard as we liked. The air mosaic had been marked off in small gridded squares. It was thus a simple matter to 'phone to Darley indicating exactly what spots, down to individual houses, were to be bombed.

After four days we began to get results in the form of offers of submission. We were able to arrange that the property of people who said they had had enough should not be bombed again, but it was made known that action would be continued until all the tribesmen were ready to come in. Exact information proved to be of great value. We knew of a man whose goodwill was assured. He lived on a rocky ridge and had as his next neighbour a man who was determined to stand out. What produced the effect we wanted was not so much the bombing of the unfriendly man's house as the immunity of our friend. In one large village which we did not want to knock about although the inhabitants were a tough lot, we came to know of a few acres of rice land in which every family had a share. The sparing of the village and the bombing of the rice land had a good effect. On the ninth day most of the tribesmen were wanting to come in, but there were three villages within a few hundred yards of each other, of which the middle one wanted to come to terms, but the two outer ones were still obstinate. By now we had obtained the use of three Victorias. They could carry heavier bombs than the D.H.9A's which had done the work up to that time. Again the two outer villages got all they had asked for while the middle one did not suffer a scratch. At dawn next morning I heard by telephone that all the Paras and Massozai had decided that they had had enough and were ready to come in. A squadron of D.H.9A's was already on its way from Kohat towards its targets. I rang up Darley who was able to get in touch with them by wireless and call them back just before they were due to drop their bombs.

Two days later I went down the valley to see a representative jirga of the tribes that had attacked us. It appeared that they had lost nine men killed. The damage to houses and land could soon



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

be put right. They said they were very sorry. They had often been threatened before with punishment for misdeeds, but nothing particular had happened. This time they had had a lesson they would not forget. Neither then nor afterwards was I able to discover that they bore the slightest resentment.

The tribal attacks had developed so suddenly that there had been no time to get the ladies away. They had obviously enjoyed their share in a real frontier occasion and morally their behaviour had been worth a lot. Now orders were received that they must leave. The order was a right one, but they hated leaving. I saw them down to Arawali and into their Victoria and said good-bye to my 'half battalions'—because actually from the point of view of morale in the valley each of them had been worth all that. There had been speculation as to how Helen's aged nurse would stand up to her first air journey. We need not have worried. When asked what she had thought of it, her reply was, "Very like a tram, Madam." Those Victorias were a bit rattly.

Finally, much to my regret, I thought it necessary to ask Pears to invite the Army to take the show over. It was not that there was now any major danger to be faced; but I had been told that we must not shoot at Afghans who were every day peppering villagers from breastworks on the ridge of the Peiwar Kotal—their breastworks were actually a few yards on our side of the border—for fear that complications with the Afghan government might follow if any of our bullets fell across the frontier. The Army would not be hampered by such restrictions.

When all was quiet again in the Peshawar area, Pears came out to congratulate his old friends of the Kurram on the show they had put up. In front of the Residency was the flagstaff. Every evening when the Militia guard lowered the flag one of the men received the flag into his arms, so that it should not touch the ground, and kissed it. Below the flagstaff was a lawn as broad and twice as long as a tennis court. This was packed with the best part of 3,000 men, each holding his .303 rifle, seated on the ground with their tribal and village leaders seated in front. After a formal speech in Pushtu, Pears announced various rewards which included the remission of a year's land revenue for all the people of the valley. Then, borrowing an idea from the annual parade held in the Afghan summer capital in memory of the 'winning of



Afghan Independence' in the third Afghan war of 1919, the orphans of the men who had been killed in action came up in turn. Each little boy saluted and was given a bundle of rupees wrapped in red silk to meet the funeral expenses of his father. Then Pears began to talk. As he talked, the days he had spent in the Kurram seemed to become as fresh in his mind as if he had never left the valley. One by one he picked out old friends, named them and their villages, and went on to pull their legs about various peccadillos and other incidents of the past. They rose to him and roared with laughter. It was the finest performance in a foreign language I ever saw. Finally the men marched past, village by village, gave eyes left to Pears under the flagstaff and dispersed.

Some anxiety had been felt at first as to the possible conduct, in face of attack by Afghan tribesmen, of the Mangal inhabitants of two large villages near the Peiwar who had close affinities with other Mangals across the Afghan border. But they had turned out to be perhaps the stoutest fighters of all. In their honour I arranged a feast of which the most important item was twelve roast oxen. Small children wept when they found that their stomachs would hold no more.

After that life in the Kurram was quiet. In the spring there had been more than enough to do, trying jirga cases and binding parties down on security not to murder each other. But in the period of recent excitement feuds had got out of gear and the valley enjoyed what must have been the most peaceful time it had known for years.

In the autumn I was called in to Peshawar for a conference. I went in early one morning from Arawali by air and so got a good view of much of the Afridi country which I had already seen from the air two or three times. As usual, a few rifle shots were let off but did no harm. The Tirah is essentially the valley of the Bara river which joins the Kabul below Peshawar. We passed over Bagh, a shrine which is the sentimental capital of the Afridis. The country is mostly bare hills in the valleys of which wheat and other crops are raised on patches of irrigated lands fed from hundreds of tiny streams. The matter for consideration by the conference was whether, if the Afridis threatened to give more trouble and air action became necessary, it would be better to take it during the winter ploughing, or when the crops were growing, or



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

when they were on the threshing floor. With the recent nine-day Para and Massozai incident in mind, I gave the opinion that the one thing necessary was to show determination. Therefore the best course would be to start as soon as possible by keeping aircraft over the Tirah to prevent the Afridis from watering their fields before ploughing, and to go on interfering with each agricultural operation as its turn came round, until they gave in. This may have been considered rather strong meat, but might have been more economical of life and of effort than the policy which was actually adopted. This was the prolonged blockading of the Khajuri plain on the Peshawar border to which many Afridis come down to graze in the cold weather. The great disappointment of that day was that, having taken in two nice two-pound trout as a present to Pears who was a keen fisherman, I looked for them in vain at breakfast and saw them appear in the shape of fishcakes at dinner.



## IX

### *Political Agent, Malakand*

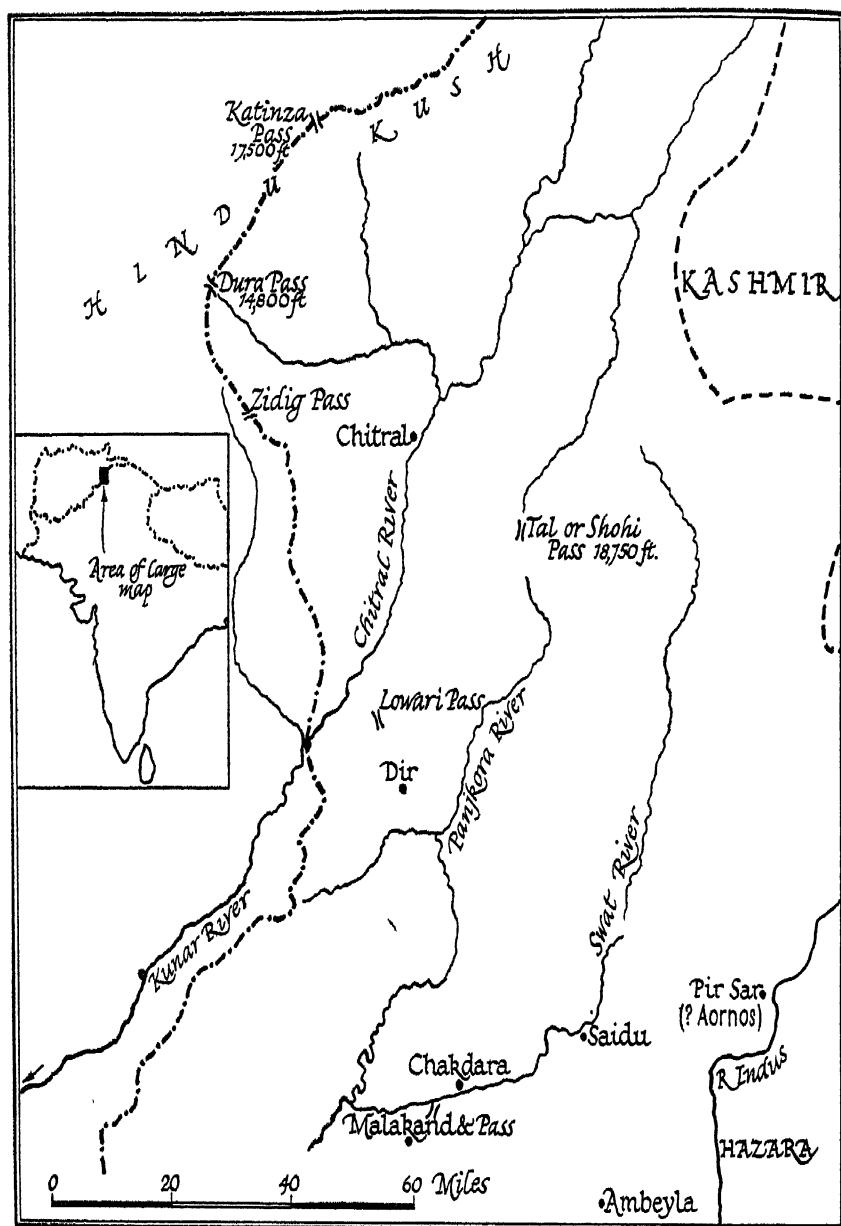
1930-31

WHEN winter was coming on I was told to move to the Malakand Political Agency. The journey by road was down to Thal, on to Kohat, across the Kohat Pass to Peshawar, on through well-remembered country to Charsadda and Mardan, and on again to the two-thousand-foot ridge of the Malakand which separated the Peshawar District from the valley of the Swat river. The Agency consisted of a small 'protected area' near the Malakand, which was loosely administered on much the same lines as the Kurram, and of a number of larger areas under their own rulers. Of these the most important were the dominions of the Wali, or Ruler, of Swat up the Swat river beyond Chakdara, of the Nawab of Dir up the Panjkora which joins the Swat twenty miles below Chakdara, and of the Mehtar of Chitral across the Lowari Pass beyond Dir.

In the past, Swat had been a region of hostile factions. When, after the Sikh Wars of the middle of the nineteenth century, the British became masters of the Punjab, a member of the Miangul family, whose original home had probably been in Central Asia, a man of great sanctity, was already established as Akhond (guardian or abbot) of a shrine at Saidu, which is on the Swat river some fifteen miles above Chakdara. The tribesmen of the region resisted the extension of British authority and in the stoutly contested Ambeyla campaign of 1863, in which the 71st (Highland Light Infantry) and 101st (Munster Fusiliers) suffered heavy casualties, both sides fought themselves to a standstill. The Akhond then came forward as a mediator and brought about an honourable settlement between combatants, who in the course of the fighting had developed great regard for each other. The Akhond died in 1870. His grandson Abdul Wadood gradually established



## VII SWAT, DIR AND CHITRAL





himself as the ruler of a considerable area in the Swat valley and steadily extended his sphere of influence.

Thick-set, grizzled, kindly, stern, with a twinkle in his eye, trustworthy and trustful, scholar enough to sign his name and to read such portions of the Holy Koran as he already knew by heart, and sole author of his own simple code of law which had recently been printed, Sir Abdul Wadood, K.C.I.E., was an example of that excellence of intellect which is often seen in men who have had little formal education.

A few days after we had arrived in the Malakand Lorraine and I went to pay him a visit. Five miles above Chakdara and about fifteen miles from the Malakand we reached the frontier of the Swat State, where the Wali was waiting to greet us. From there on the road, unmetalled but fairly good going for a car, was guarded at intervals of one or two hundred yards by local levies, facing outwards. It was said that, if the Wali saw a road guard facing inwards, he would pepper him with small shot. We had been invited to bring guns. After a short formal interview our host suggested that we should shoot chikor. Throughout the Swat valley there were a few chikor and sisi on the slopes of the hills and duck and teal and snipe down by the river. But a mile above the Palace—actually an unpretentious single-storied house in a courtyard—up a side valley, the Wali had preserved a small tract of steep hillside to which chikor were attracted by sprinkling broken rice. The Wali must have been a naturally good shot and had been encouraged by one of my predecessors who was a keen 20 bore man. Always preferring to take a difficult position in a beat, his yearly bag of game of all sorts was apt to be some 1,500 birds killed with 3,000 cartridges.

The Wali was not given to argument or long discussions. On one occasion I had asked him to fix a date for me to place before him a matter of considerable importance. I suggested that I need not press for an early reply if he wanted time to think it over. As soon as I had finished, he said, "I agree. Shall we go and shoot some duck?" The arrangements for duck were as good as for chikor. Below Saidu there were a few hundred acres of rice land by the side of the river. During the winter when the rice fields were bare the area was closely preserved and broken grain was put down. Bags might be some 250 birds, mostly mallard, early in



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

the season. On the last day, towards the middle of April, we got 782 birds, mostly teal. Like the Wali, I became a convert to a 20 bore. I had a 12 bore and Lorraine, who was about half my size, a 20 bore, both built for us by William Evans. Although her gun was not supposed to fit me, I found it so much neater and pleasanter to handle than a 12 bore that I took to using it more and more, even for duck. It seemed to hit as hard as the 12 and to kill cleaner.

The Wali had for some years been establishing control over backward regions, both towards the Indus and up the Swat river. Even within a few miles of Saidu his authority was not always unchallenged and over against the territory of the Nawab of Dir to the north the line of his frontier was in dispute. To meet these conditions without overstraining his moderate financial resources he maintained a small standing force, and a more numerous militia in which all villagers of suitable age had to serve if called up. These he accommodated in strong turreted forts built of interlocked tree trunks, with moat and drawbridge, which could be built in four or five days. In ordinary times they could be guarded by half a dozen men, but in emergency they could hold a hundred to two hundred. It was the rule that, before constructing a new fort of this kind, he should obtain the approval of the political authorities; but he was sure of his ground and it may have been with a laugh up his sleeve that one day he told me that he planned to build a new stockade and that, in order that I might be the better able to judge whether approval should be given, he had started work—so should we go to have a look at it? When we arrived there, it seemed to me that the work was nearly finished. Amongst his other interests was a small brown trout hatchery which had been started by my predecessor. From this we stocked some reaches of the Swat river and took up fry by air for the Mehtar of Chitral.

I was delighted when the Wali suggested that we should go into camp with a view to climbing Pir Sar, a height of some 8,000 feet which overlooks the valleys of the Swat and of the Indus. In Kashmir in 1926 I had seen a good deal of the great Central Asian explorer and archaeologist Sir Aurel Stein. I had discovered that his idea of happiness and of ideal conditions for writing was to sit in the door of his tent on an alp high above Srinagar in midwinter





Sir Abdul Wadood, K.B.E., Founder of Swat







with the ink just not freezing on his pen. He had then recently returned from a two months' visit to Swat during which he had traced from the records of the Greek historian Arrian the detailed movements of Alexander the Great on his invasion of India. Learning that I was P. A. Malakand, Sir Aurel was so good as to send me a copy of his book 'On Alexander's Track to the Indus'. He tells how 'In the spring of 327 B.C. Alexander, after two years of strenuous fighting in Bactria and Sogdiana, had crossed the Hindu Kush towards Kabul. There he strengthened the hold he had previously secured upon this part of what is now Afghanistan, and then set out for the conquest of India.'

The crux of Alexander's campaign in Swat had been the storming of a very strong position on Mount Aornos. Scholars have explained this very Greek-sounding name as meaning either that it was a place of many birds (a-'intensive'), or that the mountain was so high that not even an eagle could fly to the top of it (a-'privative'). But Stein was too experienced a hand to be taken in by this. Place-names have a habit of surviving even through a succession of languages and, having worked out the geography of Alexander's march in detail, he felt sure that he was right in identifying Arrian's Aornos with a natural rock fortress called Una-Sar, or Una Peak, which stood above Pir Sar.

It was a hot climb. The Wali, ever courteous, had refreshments and even camp chairs produced at frequent intervals. In early days when shooting on mountain sides near Simla I had been taught a useful trick. Take a pair of putties or a pugree, pass them through your waistbelt, and give the ends to two men in front. At the cost of practically no effort to themselves they give you just that little bit of forward motion which enables you to sail up a steep hill.

From the top we were able to see into some of the areas on the west bank of the Indus, where the Wali was gradually extending his influence. Across the Indus lay the Hazara District. Beyond that was Kashmir.

On other visits the Wali took obvious pleasure in showing examples of his versatility and drive—school, hospital, road works, irrigation canals already built or planned, a small rifle factory, fruit orchards and nursery. One day when I was out for a walk before breakfast I saw a figure that seemed somehow to be familiar



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

doing a good five miles an hour heel-and-toe. It turned out to be the Wali's Commander-in-Chief. The Wali had recently cut himself down to one meal a day and not too much at that. The C.-in-C. had been told that he could either keep his weight down or follow his master's example. Besides doing all these things and being the chief fount of justice in his State, the Wali spent many hours of the day and night in prayer and meditation.

Besides its importance as the junction of the roads to Swat and to Dir, and thence to Chitral, Chakdara is of interest because it figures prominently in 'The Story of the Malakand Field Force' (published in 1899) by Winston Spencer Churchill, Lieutenant, 4th Queen's Own Hussars, and because near it there is a rocky ridge which is said to have been the scene of the exploit of Kipling's regimental water-carrier Gunga Din. Such acts of gallantry were no doubt performed on many battle-fields.

At intervals along the river below Chakdara there was good mahseer fishing to be had. Across it were a number of small tribal areas in which a curious custom prevailed, somewhat on the lines of our own parliamentary system. The population of a village normally consisted of two parties, the Sharawals or Drivers Out, and the Sharunkis, or Opposition, who had been Driven Out of the village. The basic cause was shortage of cultivable land. If, as was apt to happen, the party in power became high-handed and drove out still more men, the balance of strength turned in favour of what had been the Driven Out party, who then turned on the Drivers Out and converted them into the Opposition. Thus, turn and turn about, a good time was had by all.

In the in-lying 'protected' area the policy was to run as simple a system of administration as possible. A light land revenue had been imposed more as a symbol of authority than for the sake of the money it brought in and was more than balanced in favour of the people by facilities in the way of education and a hospital. There happened at the time to be with the Indian Army detachment in the Malakand a first-rate young Army doctor named Waters who also acted as civil surgeon. The people seemed to be unwilling to spare time to be ill except in spring and autumn when there was not much work to be done in the fields and the climate was ideal. This doctor's reputation spread, patients flocked in and to provide for the increased numbers we put up at a cost of



## POLITICAL AGENT, MALAKAND

£7 a grass-roofed timber shed for twelve beds which served its purpose perfectly.

For dealing with cases of crime and civil suits the usual method of procedure was by reference to a Council of Elders. Long-term prisoners were sent off to the Peshawar Jail, but there was also a local lock-up. It is a shame to make men into jail-birds if it can possibly be avoided. A short, sharp and effective remedy in minor cases, especially if a man was obstinate about paying compensation ordered after jirga trial, was to put him in the lock-up for as little as three or four days and tell him to get his family to feed him. This involved a certain amount of social stigma and brought in the influence for good of the women of the family who did not enjoy a daily trudge of several miles. The very last thing wanted was that the administered area should be over-administered. Finding that my two assistants for the area were complaining of over-work, I reduced their number to one, which proved effective.

The territory of the Nawab of Dir extended from a few miles north of Chakdara to the Lowari Pass where the Panjkora river has its source. Both the Swat valley and the Panjkora valley must have been thickly populated and very prosperous in Buddhist times. The banks of the rivers were studded with domed stupas whose outer layers of marble or hard limestone had been plundered in the course of many hundred years for use in other buildings; and the ground was littered with pieces of sculpture. The making of graven images being an offence in the eyes of Mahomedans, the noses of many of the statues had been chipped off. The bridges over the rivers were usually of the cantilever type which seems to be common throughout central Asia wherever large timbers are available. To protect his State against any possible designs on the part of his neighbours the Nawab maintained a small army. He equipped it from a factory which turned out, from bars of iron and old steel rails, rifles and even small cannon. On being asked who were his best workers, he promptly replied, "Orphans, because they work hardest."

From Dir I went on to visit the Mehtar of Chitral. At the summit of the Lowari Pass I was met by Roger Bacon, Assistant Political Agent for Chitral. From the bottom of the Pass we motored in a small car along a rough narrow track which, unparapeted and with the Chitral river rushing in great force far



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

below, was alarming to a newcomer. On either side of the river towered hills of limestone and conglomerate several thousand feet high, the home of the ram chikor, which is five times the size of an ordinary partridge, and of markhor and ibex. What was for long the record markhor was shot one Sunday afternoon by a local postmaster who had wandered out with a rusty gun on the chance of finding something to shoot for the pot.

I did not see enough of Chitral to enable me to write about the country except in very general terms. Its importance lay in its strategic position. Alexander, the early Roman Emperors, Asoka, Akbar, Napoleon, and perhaps every great conqueror throughout history had been perplexed by the problem of where the limits of empire should be fixed. Before the Sikh wars, and even after the first Sikh war of 1845, the British would have been glad to advance no farther north than the Sutlej. Once that was passed there was no natural boundary to India short of the eastern ranges of the Hindu Kush and the Karakoram mountains. Chitral extended from the north side of the Lowari Pass above Dir to the eastern Hindu Kush and from the Afghan border to Chilas and Gilgit which were feudatories of Kashmir. The weakness of the Chitral position was that the Chitral river on its way to join the Kabul flows through Afghan territory and that, in the event of serious tribal risings on the North-West Frontier, Chitral could more easily be approached from the Afghan side than from India. If once the Afghans were to succeed in throwing a force into Chitral, it would be extremely difficult to dislodge them, and it would be easy for them to enter Gilgit and Kashmir by the back door.

The story of the Chitral war of 1895 is told in Robertson's 'The Story of a Minor Siege' and in E. F. Knight's 'Where Three Empires Meet'. By way of insurance against the possibility of Afghan complications the Government of India maintained in Chitral a battalion of infantry and a well-armed civil force somewhat similar to the Kurram Militia, the Chitral Scouts.

Both in Swat and in Chitral, as had been the case in the Kurram, it was apparent that Pears, the Chief Commissioner, who had been P. A. Malakand, was held in great affection and respect. He was in his mature prime and seemed set for a successful and happy five-year term. I had been back in the Malakand a few days when the telephone rang and I learned that, while he was out for a

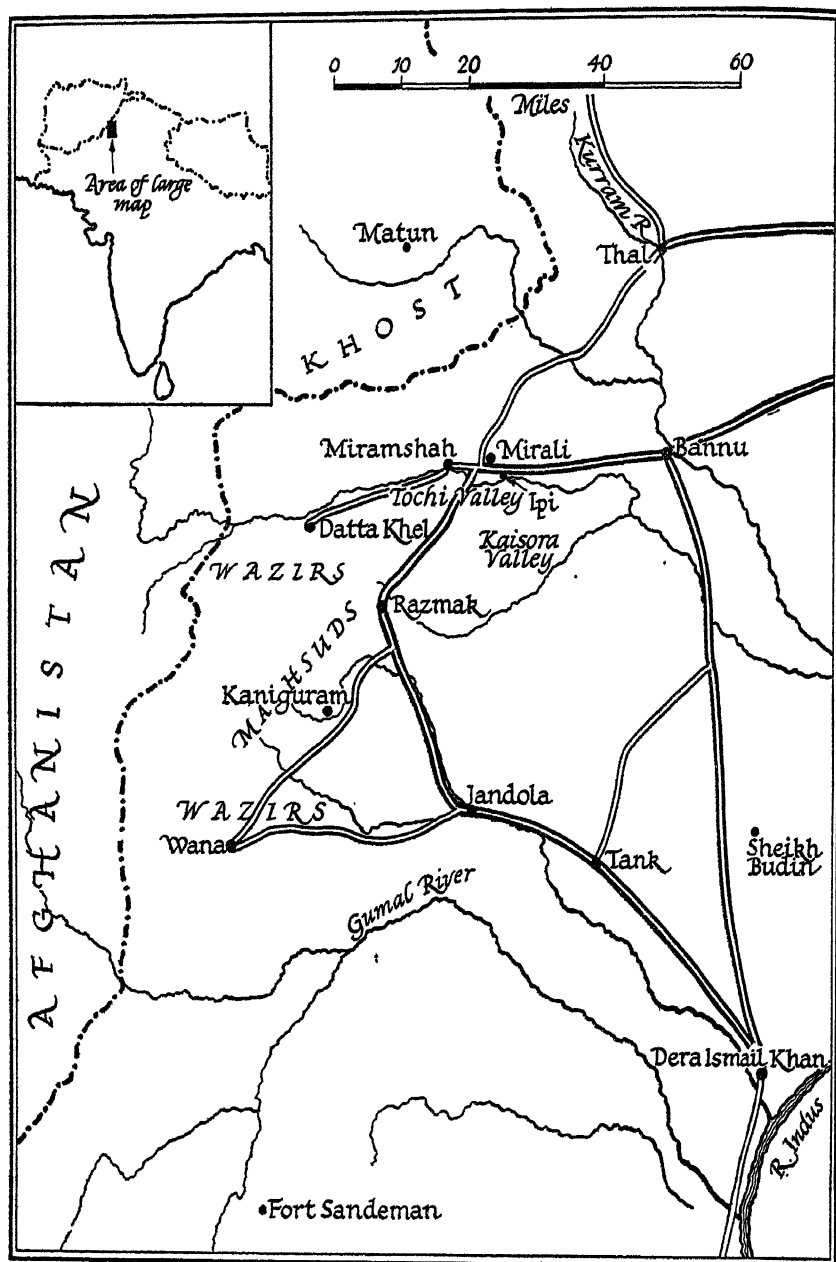


walk along the pipe line at Nathia Gali, he had slipped, or perhaps had a sudden black-out, and had been killed instantaneously by falling down the precipitous hillside. I let the Wali know and he came in at once, trembling in his distress. After a few words he broke down. There was nothing I could do except sit quietly with him until he regained control of himself. Reg Griffith, of whom I had seen a good deal during the Mohmand troubles of 1915-16 and more recently as Resident in Waziristan, was told to take over temporarily as Chief Commissioner while the question of a permanent successor was under consideration. All who knew him well hoped, and indeed felt confident, that he would be appointed. As Personal Assistant to Roos-Keppel, Commandant of Border Police, Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner in almost every District, and A.P.A. or P.A. or both in practically every Political Agency, he knew the Province backwards, was well liked, had not ever, as far as I knew, put a foot wrong and, in spite of never leaving the Frontier, had breadth of view with which he combined gaiety.

As the summer wore on an old disagreement between Swat and Dir as to the exact position of their common frontier had warmed up and their armies were in position on either side of a ridge which both States claimed. Reports indicated that the fighting was not fierce, but that a serious situation might develop. There was in the Protected Area a small corps of political levies. They were not very efficient in the military sense, partly perhaps because ordinarily there was not very much for them to do. Their Subedar Major, a Syed (descendant of the Prophet), was more noted for his piety than as a man of war. In the circumstances it seemed to me that the best thing to do was to instruct him to take up a position with some of his men midway between the two opposed forces and not to leave it day or night. This worked well until one day he accepted an invitation to take lunch with one of the opposing commanders. His action was resented by the other side as indicating some lack of complete impartiality; but the incident passed off.



# VIII WAZIRISTAN. MAIN ROADS





## X

### *Waziristan*

1931-33

GRIFFITH became Chief Commissioner and I was told to take this place in Waziristan.

From the Malakand the road led across the Peshawar plain to the Kohat Pass and on through Kohat, where the road to the Kurram branched off, to Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan. Between Bannu and D.I.K. the tangled hills of Waziristan loomed up to the west. The main road into Waziristan led from Bannu up the valley of the Tochi to Mirali, on up to Razmak, and down through Jandola to D.I.K. Branch roads took off from Mirali to the mouth of the Kurram valley and, more southerly, to Miramshah and Datta Khel; from a few miles south of Razmak to Wana; and from Jandola to Wana.

In Waziristan, which was about the size of Yorkshire, the tribes which mattered most were the Mahsuds and the Wazirs. The Mahsuds occupied territory which extended from Razmak through Kaniguram to a range of hills which overlooked the Wana plain. Of the Wazirs there were two main branches. The northern Wazirs occupied the Tochi valley and the southern Wazirs the Wana area. Between Mahsud territory and the Durand Line there was a roadless area in which the territories of the northern and southern Wazirs met. Both branches were closely related to other Wazirs who lived on the Afghan side of the Durand Line.

The Wazirs and Mahsuds were fine men. The trouble had long been that, as in the case of other highlanders known to history, their appetites had exceeded their food supply and they had more respect for initiative than for law. "May God make thee a good thief" was a common formula for wishing a child success in life.

As the prosperity of the inhabitants of Bannu and D.I.K. increased, they became a more and more tempting bait to the



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

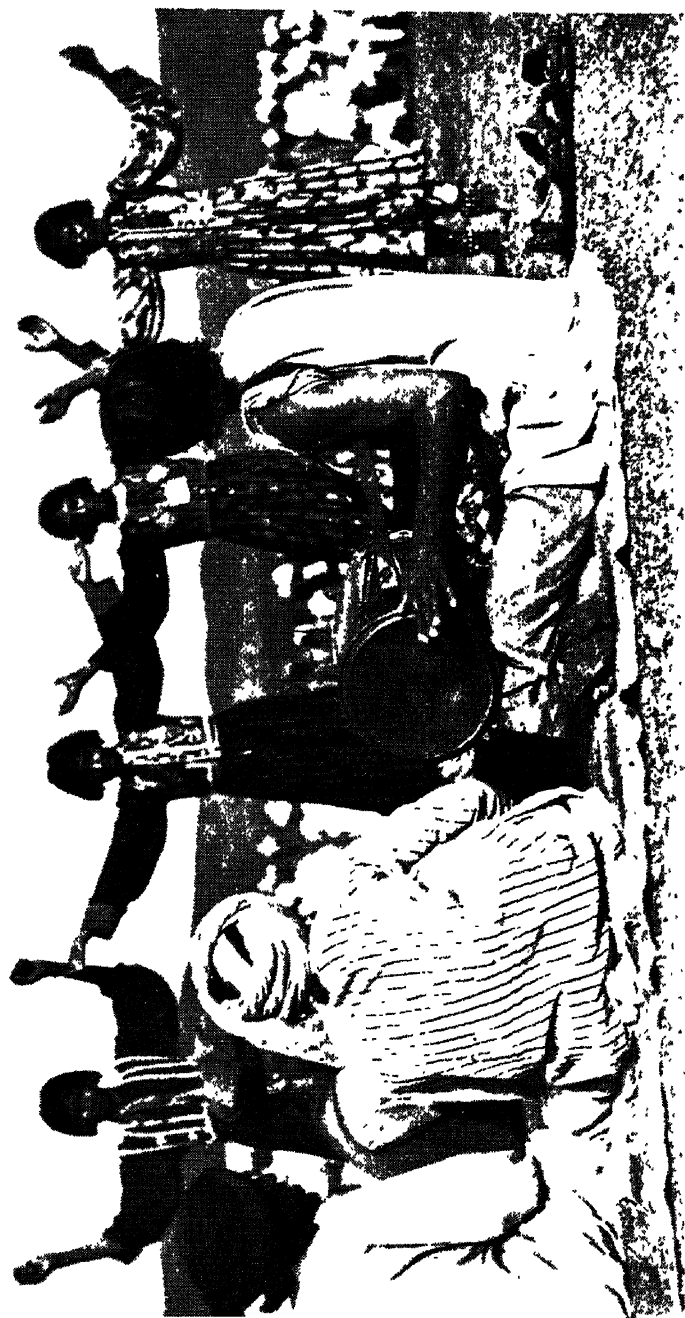
Wazirs and Mahsuds, who year by year became better and better armed with rifles and ammunition made in their own village factories, brought in from across the Durand Line, or smuggled from the Persian Gulf. To meet the situation three policies were tried in turn.

The first was the 'close-border' system of defending the Bannu and D.I.K. Districts by means of posts strung out along the Waziristan border and by sending occasional tip-and-run expeditions into the Waziristan hills. In those days the barren ridge of Sheikh Budin, between Bannu and D.I.K., passed muster as a hot-weather station for troops. It was a local tradition that Kipling's 'From hill to hill the signal ran, Don't dance or ride with General Bangs, a most immoral man' was based on an incident when a newly-wed, sent out on a tip-and-run expedition, had misgivings as to temptations which might confront his dear little wife at Sheikh Budin which was the centre of helio communications.

Meanwhile Sandeman in Baluchistan had been the pioneer of a second policy, emphasized by 'a stick in one hand and a bag of rupees in the other', of encouraging tribesmen to govern themselves and to keep themselves to themselves. A similar system of allowances to tribes and to their leaders and of control through local civil militias was working well in Waziristan, even under the strain of the third Afghan war of 1919, when, without reference to higher authority, a certain Political Officer and a subordinate military commander decided that it would be prudent to withdraw from Datta Khel, near the head of the Tochi valley, to Miramshah. As they neared a militia post half-way, they saw 'girls' dancing and preparations in hand for their entertainment. The 'girls' were Wazir tribesmen and the welcome they received was a salvo of rapid fire. At once the Wazirs and Mahsuds were up in arms and it was only by a combination of pluck, skill and endurance that Guy Russell and others managed to get away from Wana to Fort Sandeman in Baluchistan. The work of many years had been undone.

In the long and tough campaign which followed a brilliant piece of work was done by Pears, the Chief Political Officer to the force. After the Tochi had been brought under control from the Bannu side, the next main objective was Razmak, where





Wazir dancers







## WAZIRISTAN

the territory of the Tochi Wazirs joined that of the Mahsuds. Throughout the tribal areas of the N.W.F.P. the practice was to help the tribesmen to lead an honest and useful life by contracting with them for the supply of such articles as firewood, grass, meat and other local produce and for the construction of roads and buildings. By promising such employment and allowances, subject to good conduct, Pears induced the Tochi Wazirs not only to refrain from opposing a military advance to Razmak, but to help it on. Once Razmak had been occupied, it was only a matter of time, effort and money—and heavy casualties—before order was restored throughout Waziristan.

Then had come the problem whether it would be wiser to continue to maintain military garrisons in Waziristan or to try to revert to something on the lines of the pre-1919 system. The decision had been in favour of retaining regular military garrisons.

The adoption of this third policy had come to mean a strong mixed Brigade at Razmak; two battalions of regular Indian troops at Mirali in the Tochi; a Brigade in support at Bannu; a battalion at Thal at the mouth of the Kurram, with a Brigade, primarily concerned with the Afridi front, behind it at Kohat; a Brigade at Wana; two civil corps, the Tochi Scouts based on Miramshah and the South Waziristan Scouts based on Jandola; a large number of tribal irregulars, called Khassadars, for local watch and ward; and a complete system of allowances to tribes and sections and sub-sections of tribes and to their natural leaders, the tribal maliks.

As Resident I was responsible to the Chief Commissioner for watching the work of the Political Agents of North and South Waziristan and for keeping in touch both with the military authorities and with the Deputy Commissioners of Kohat, Bannu and D.I.K. and the Political Agent, Kurram. The men with whom I had most to do on the military side were Major General S. B. Pope, commanding the Waziristan District, Philip Neame, V.C., his Chief of Staff, and Duke his right-hand man for supplies and transport. Their headquarters, and mine, were D.I.K. in winter and Razmak in summer. The Political Agents were Kenneth Packman in the Tochi and Harry Johnson in South Waziristan. They, and Pope also, knew a great deal about Waziristan. Pope, who had broken short his time at Cambridge to serve in the South African War, had a natural sympathy with tough men, whether



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Boer, Mahsud or Wazir, and understood their inclination to live their own sort of life.

In the autumn horde after horde of nomads from Afghanistan, with their wives, babies, tents, camels, cattle, sheep, goats, dogs and fowls, streamed down by various routes to spend the winter in the plains round D.I.K. Many of them went as far afield as Calcutta and Bombay for trade and to collect the interest due on an infinite number of small loans.

The chief of the Nasir tribe was a patriarch whom Michelangelo might have been glad to have as a model for a statue of Moses. He had a still finer son who must have stood about 6' 6". The first time they called I invited them into the drawing room where Lorraine gave them a cup of tea and practised a little Persian on them. They called again sooner than I might have expected and we had a chat. After a time the conversation flagged, but they still failed to make a move. Finally the son said, "But is the Little Lady not at home?" Luckily she was. A few months later I heard that the old man had died and that on his deathbed he had given his son an account of every rupee he owed to any man whether in Afghanistan or in India, and had said that every man must be paid in full whatever was due to him. I was told that he carried all his transactions in his head.

One of the principal landowners of D.I.K. was a highly-placed officer of the Post and Telegraph Department. His passion was hawking and he invited us to go out with him one Sunday. The intended quarry was the lesser florican or houbara and we strung out on our horses to put them up. The head hawker was a little dried-up mouse of a man mounted on a very small lean pony like himself. It was rough going and in his action, in spite of the vast difference in their size, he reminded me of Lord Irwin out with the Delhi Hounds. He had the same gift of hardly seeming to move and yet of keeping up better than any of us. How he bore the weight of a big hawk on his forearm I don't know. On the way home after a picnic lunch I noticed that our host and Lorraine had drifted away from the rest of us and were deep in



## WAZIRISTAN

conversation. She told me afterwards that he had been educating her in the main principles of the sport. The hawk or falcon and its quarry should be evenly matched in speed and strength. Then, if the quarry was a houbara, it became a question of whether the hawk could get into position a little above the houbara to make its swoop. The houbara on the other hand tried to fly a little above and ahead of the hawk and to blind it or lessen its speed by squirting out a sticky excrement.

Of the very many good meals I have eaten in villages I remember none more savoury than the not too hot chicken curries and spicy pilaus of the Bannu border, followed by well thumb-marked ready-peeled hard-boiled eggs. In Waziristan the special delicacy was collops of freshly killed goat or sheep roasted on ramrods over a low fire. A former Political Agent—his shadow never did grow less—had earned lasting fame by doing justice to three full-scale meals on his way up a single hill. Admittedly it was the highest hill in Waziristan.

In the spring Lorraine went home to the children and I moved to Razmak which, in common with the rest of Waziristan, was strictly a 'men only' place both for troops and for politicals. Mahsud and Wazir maliks (headmen of tribes and sections) streamed in to call and gave me the chance of getting to know something of them and their affairs. To obtain a clear idea of the tribal pattern in all its details would obviously be the work of many years. With the two Agencies in the skilled hands of Johnson and Packman there was no need for me to butt in and do their work over again and less well. The one principle I asked them to observe was that, while they were at liberty in their discretion to say Yes to almost anything the local military authorities might want, I would rather they should not say No except through me or after consulting me. I was in close touch with Pope and Neame and if there were two sides to a question it was easy for us to discuss it.

Packy and Johnny both had a way with the tribesmen—not the same way but an individual one. The success of both was built up on a foundation of sympathy and hard work. In manner Packy was apt to be exuberant and Johnny quiet and even stern but with a smile lurking in the background. One day in Persia I had asked a Persian friend how somebody who was a recognized



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

authority on the language spoke Persian. "Oh, perfectly," he replied, "indeed so well that not even the Mullas can understand him." But it was not that sort of perfection that a Political Agent needed to have in Pushtu. His job was to understand whatever might be said in a variety of dialects and to catch nuances implied but not expressed; to be able to put things clearly; and to know how to reason with maliks or perhaps with a large jirga of a whole tribe. Few of the tribesmen of the North-West Frontier could read and write. Like other languages which live more in the mouths of men than in books, Pushtu is rich in idioms. Pathans have their own customs in the matter of ablutions. One day some maliks were becoming somewhat muddled in argument and tending to rush their fences. "Hey, hey," said Johnny quietly, "Don't pull down your trousers until you get to the stream."

It was some months later that Packy offered to take me down the Khaisora river from the Mirali-Razmak road towards the Bannu border through an area over which our control was not very firmly established. One of the objects of the trip was to decide where a new outpost should be built. The first day's journey was done with an escort of Scouts and Khassadars but the more risky part would be the next day's. On the second morning Packy said, "I hope you don't mind. The soldiers said they wanted those Scouts for a tactical exercise so I've let them go off." He laughed his way down the valley, showering five rupee notes by way of paying our first-footing, and took me to the house of a malik who had tea ready for us, with a sugar-iced cake fresh out from Bannu. Part of the joke, which Packy had not explained to me, was that a few days before he had handed out a total of nearly a hundred years' imprisonment for murder to the near relations of our host. This was enough to incline the families concerned to reconsider the question of paying blood-money compensation and it was not long before the prisoners were again at liberty.

The Wali of Swat paid a visit to Razmak and I was able to show him something of the country from the air. He was a quiet man and I wondered what he thought of the big defence lay-out, which was so unlike his own methods. It might have been a good thing if some of those in authority in Waziristan had returned his visit and seen his system of pill-box forts. It seemed to me that Razmak,



## WAZIRISTAN

like Topsy, had just growed and was too much sprawled out to be easy or economical to defend. It was also dependent on a precarious water supply which could easily have been blocked.

Another honoured visitor was the Commander of the P. & O. *Razmak*. In an appreciative bread-and-butter letter to Pope he reported that he had had a fine time. He could just remember arriving at Razmak, but nothing more until he had discovered that he was well on his way back to Bombay.

One morning I was out by myself on the bare hills above Razmak. Suddenly there was a hue and cry and the sound of rifle shots, then no more shots for a moment or two, and then a fusillade. Everywhere on the Frontier there was a strict rule that shots must not be fired on or across a government road. Some Wazirs were trying to kidnap a Mahsud girl and Mahsuds had turned out in pursuit. The pause in the firing had been while the pursuers were crossing the main road.

I visited the abandoned hill station of Sheikh Budin. In that parched atmosphere many of the buildings were still almost intact. Graves of young children were reminders of the hardships of earlier days.

From time to time I saw much of the Scouts. Like the Kurram Militia, they were exactly suited to the conditions of the area in which they served, smart in the elements of close order drill, very fast across country, hardy, trustworthy, familiar with the geography and the people of the areas over which they worked and able to recognize friend or foe by instinct. For safety they relied more on pace than on pickets. The average British Officer was a super-fit man, but even so he expected, when he was new to the work or if he had been away on a few months' home leave, to sick his heart up on his first cross-country patrol or two. Most of the men had served or looked forward to serving for twenty years or more. They were ready to go anywhere and do anything, whether they had a British Officer with them or not. The British Officers, who were in the proportion of about one to a hundred and fifty Scouts, were picked men of the regimental rather than the Staff College type, fresh from their regiments to which they would be returning after two or three years. Those taken on after an interval for a second tour of duty in the Scouts were men who had been marked successes during their first tour. The



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Commandants were Captains or young Majors. They seemed to rejoice in their temporary freedom from red tape.

A Scouts or Political officer might drop in suddenly at a Scouts post. If he whispered the word *chigha*, which meant 'pursuit party', a platoon would be fallen in within a minute. If, in addition to his equipment and rifle and ammunition, any man had not on him some food to keep him going for a day or two and a full water bottle, he was likely to be degraded or discharged. All ranks including the British Officers wore practically identical kit—khaki shirts and shorts in summer, and in winter thick grey shell-back flannel shirts and grey *partogs*, which looked rather like ankle-length plus-fours. To keep off mosquitos in summer and as protection against the cold of a winter night they carried an extra length of thin pugree material.

There were also marked differences between the various Corps. In the Kurram the Militia were amongst their own friends and relations who could be relied on for a night's lodging and for help, if needed, in pursuing raiders. In Waziristan it was the Wazirs and Mahsuds who were being policed. In the Kurram the personnel of the Militia was mainly local, whereas the Waziristan Scouts Corps were mostly recruited from other parts of the Frontier. In the Kurram a casualty could be left in the charge of the khan of a village, whereas in Waziristan he must either keep up somehow or be left behind to take his chance.

A fundamental difference between regular troops and irregulars was that, whereas irregulars could take risks and if they took one risk too many the matter could be adjusted at leisure, regulars must never fail.

Then there were those extremely irregular irregulars, the tribal Khassadars, for whose behaviour the tribes were responsible. Equipped only with a rifle and a belt, to which they would add their own bandoliers, their chief function was watch and ward on the roads. They had their critics, but they were useful. They could be used for various jobs which otherwise would have had to be done by Scouts and they were of value as white mice. So long as they carried on with their simple tasks, Packy and Johnny could be fairly sure that their tribal sections were not intending to give trouble.

Behind all this was the system of money allowances to tribes



## WAZIRISTAN

and their maliks, and of agreements or understandings to the effect that, subject to continued good behaviour, preference in the allotment of contracts which they were capable of handling would be given out to the local people. Again critics were apt to say that such concessions were no better than bribery and blackmail. Such hard words broke no bones. Hospitality was inseparable from status and I never knew a Waziristan malik who did not spend on hospitality much more than the allowance he drew from Government. Isaac Walton quotes Dr. Boteler as having said of strawberries, "Doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless God never did." So also the elaborate and admittedly costly system in Waziristan had been working tolerably well for several years. It was not perfect, but it worked.

One day Packy took me up the Tochi valley, past the 'dancing girls' post to Datta Khel. In 1929 ex-King Amanulla's uncle Nadir Khan, returning from Paris, entered Afghanistan from India. In doing so, he faced a double risk. At the exits from the London Zoo a solemn hexameter gives warning that VISITORS PASSING THIS GATE CANNOT RE-ENTER THE GARDENS. Nadir had every right to enter his own country, taking his life in his hands; but, if he had been forced back into India by Bacha, the Government of India would have been obliged, so long as Bacha continued to be in power, not to allow him to enter Afghanistan from India a second time.

Winning the support of tribesmen from many directions, Nadir entered Kabul, killed Bacha Saqao, and became King. Amongst the most eager of his supporters were Wazirs who, disregarding orders not to cross the Durand line, entered Kabul with Nadir Khan, helped themselves liberally to whatever loot they could lay hands on and returned with it in triumph to their homes.

After the manner of Kings, Amanulla had in the course of his travels conferred honours and decorations on the diplomatists and others who in his opinion had been of service to him; and H.M.G. had permitted their acceptance. Francis Humphrys as British Minister had received the title of Sardar i Ala, or Most Exalted Sirdar, and I that of Sirdar i Ali, or Exalted Sirdar. But either Amanulla had underestimated the probable extent of his own liberality or the Kabul Mint had not been able to work fast enough and, while F. H. had received his decoration, I had not



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

received mine. Outside the Scouts post at Datta Khel Wazirs were offering for sale, very cheap, Purdey guns and other loot from Kabul; and it was there that for five rupees I bought an undoubtedly genuine Sardar i Ali badge.

Visiting Wana at the other end of Waziristan, I was taken in hand by Peter Hailey, Johnny's Assistant Political Officer. Thirty miles south-east of Wana the Gumal river forms the boundary between the N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan. Geoffrey Betham, Political Agent in the Zhob, had promised to come out from Fort Sandeman to meet Peter and me at the frontier. To guard the road Jock Scotland, who looked particularly enormous in *partog* trousers, had gone ahead with a party of Scouts and Khassadars. We reached our bank in safety and were getting a late breakfast ready when, tripping lightly and delicately across the stepping stones—in the cold weather there is very little water in the Gumal—came Dorothy Betham, Geoffrey's wife, to set foot in the 'men only' territory of Waziristan. 'When a man's afraid, a beautiful maid is a cheering sight to see.' The incident set me thinking of the difference between Waziristan as it actually was and as, if it had not been for the incidents of 1919, it might perhaps have become.

Attention had to be paid to a war-game exercise which was to be repeated on the ground. The object was to throw additional supplies into Wana in anticipation of, or in the early days of, a general rising of tribes all along the frontier. When it was tried out on the ground the regular and irregular troops available proved to be insufficient for the task. What had puzzled some of us from the beginning was why the stocking of Wana should not be taken in hand while the going was good and several months' supplies maintained there instead of only a few weeks'. At a pow-wow afterwards, Pope, who had presumably been acting under instructions from high military authority, got up and said a few nice things about how well everybody concerned had worked together. He then went on, perhaps with the deliberate intention of drawing fire, to say that admittedly the troops employed had been a bit thin on the ground. He was aware that some people thought it would be better to hold larger stocks in Wana; but the Politicals could be trusted to give ample warning of likely trouble; additional supplies could at any time be got up quickly from depots





Kanchenjunga







## WAZIRISTAN

in India; and the carrying of an extra month or two's supplies would be prohibitively expensive. He then asked for frank opinions and called on me to speak. I said that, as far as I knew, frontier troubles were apt to develop without much warning and that a single mishap when getting up supplies at a time of tension might have serious consequences; Duke said that the one thing certain in the event of mobilization for possible widespread trouble on the frontier was that no extra supplies and transport would be available for Waziristan for a long time; and Neame added that the cost of holding at Wana, which had an excellent climate, an extra month's supplies would be roughly equal, in terms of interest on capital, to the pay of one subaltern for six months. But these criticisms were disregarded in high circles. When a couple of years later it was decided at a time of tension to put additional supplies into Wana, it was an attack on a transport column bringing them up that precipitated serious trouble.

There were other indications also that the system of control in Waziristan was proving to be inconveniently expensive. With a view to economy Army Headquarters in India desired that tests should be carried out to see whether expenditure on the Scouts could be cut down by using Regulars to supplement Scouts on major Scouts occasions such as patrols in force. I talked the project over first with Packy and Johnny and the Scouts Commandants and then with Pope. None of us liked it, but higher authority insisted. So I went off to Murree to see General Cassels the G.O.C.-in-C., Northern Army. In the course of three days he gave me much of his time. He insisted that the tests must be what he called 'acid tests' and, in order that there should be no doubt about the matter, he gave me a note in which he stated his views as to the sort of tests which should be devised. The point on which he insisted was that Regulars supplementing Scouts must conform to Scouts standards in all respects. Armed with this note I went back to Pope, seeing Griffie the Governor, who knew Waziristan much better than I did, on the way. The more Pope and I looked into the matter, the less we liked it. It was then the hot weather and we stalled as long as we could. Finally, when the weather was getting cooler, we were told we must get on with the job. In order that the tests might be real, but not too acid, I went round to Guy Russell, who had great experience of Scouts work and was then



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

commanding a battalion at Razmak, and asked whether he would be so good as to draw up a dozen tests, short, medium and full scale. Wanting to make extra sure that the tests as drawn up were not excessively tough, I took them to Pope, who knew all that there was to be known about Waziristan and Regulars and Scouts. He said they were all perfectly fair, but he thought that one of them was a bit on the tough side; so I added several hours to the time allowed for it. The idea was that, as would normally be the case for Scouts, there should be no previous warning.

One Saturday there was a race meeting at Razmak. After the last race I put twelve numbered slips of paper into my hat and got somebody to draw three of them. The tests were on. One was a twelve-hour patrol due to start from Jandola at midnight and to finish there at midday on Sunday. The Regulars were very car-sick on the way down from Razmak and were handicapped by soggy boots due to their having to wade a river, whereas the Scouts wore sandals and always carried an extra pair of grass sandals for fording streams. The Regulars, unable to keep up, reached Jandola in small groups before the eyes of critical tribesmen. The second test which was from the Bannu side up the Kaisora valley—it happened to be the one which had been scaled down by several hours—was indecisive. It had been intended that it should be carried out on an unpopular form of concentrated ration called Sheikapara biscuit, and in 'enemy' country where half of the personnel would have to be on the alert all night, but the villagers who lived near the site of the night's halt produced a feast and said they would safeguard the bivouac. Under these conditions the Regulars got through with the test, but said they had had all they wanted. The Scouts on the other hand felt they had hardly stretched their legs.

The third test started from Wana and was due to end about two and a half days later half-way between Jandola and Wana. Coming across from the Tochi side by air and seeing no troops on the move, I imagined that I was too late. But it was the other way round. After an hour or two the rumour got about that the Regulars were exhausted and were being helped in by the Scouts. Water was sent out at once in the direction from which they were expected and every available man was set to work to cook chapattis. Just as these were being sent out in big baskets, some



## WAZIRISTAN

sensible fellow had the bright idea of marking some of the baskets 'Hindu Food' and others 'Mahomedan Food'; otherwise even in extremity the Hindus amongst the Regulars might have refused to eat anything. In the afternoon parties of Regulars and Scouts came in. Some men had abandoned their rifles. At the pace set, the Regulars, in spite of the Scouts taking on most of the guard duties at night, had been walked off their legs as surely as a Derby winner, if set to do a hundred miles over rough country in a couple of days, would be taken off his legs. More than once I have seen men all gone from fatigue or thirst. When they are in that state they can hardly be held to account for what they do. Ask Everest climbers and they will readily admit that there are limits to physical and mental endurance. Luckily the patrol had been through an uninhabited area and few tribesmen had seen what happened.

We were all distressed at the results of the action into which we had been forced. Pope said that, sooner than have to do with any more of these tests, he would 'hang up his hat.' But actually there was not much fear of that. The tests had started on Saturday night and by midday on Thursday I had got a report to Griffith, by air. That was the last we ever heard of acid tests. But nobody doubted that, if there were some things at which Scouts were better than Regulars, there were many things at which Regulars were much better than Scouts. Their functions were different.

In connection with the subject of possible economies on defence arrangements it was of interest to try to work out the comparative cost of regular Indian troops, Scouts, and Khassadars. It was not easy to obtain definite figures in regard to Regulars because regular units were not debited with the cost of centralized services such as rations and transport. The closest estimate that could be arrived at was that one Khassadar cost about 30 rupees (rather over £2) a month, a Scout 60 and an Indian infantryman at least 120.

Another indication that the financial shoe pinched was in the matter of the preferential treatment of tribesmen in regard to contracts. Similar difficulties had arisen in the Kurram and in the Malakand; and in each area Politicals had had to take a firm stand. Admittedly contracts based on open tender might be cheaper than tribal contracts if the element of protection was not



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

taken into account, and certainly there was something a little odd about tribesmen who could not read and write obtaining help in making out their bills from the same men who at the next stage would be checking them. But policy was policy and the bargain which Pears had made with the Tochi Wazirs could not be regarded as an obsolete scrap of paper.

In Razmak the leading building contractor for work beyond the scope of the tribesmen was a tall intelligent attractive Hindu. Originally a schoolmaster, on becoming rather deaf he had taken to trade and I had known him well as a merchant in East Persia. Whenever he came to see me I looked forward to the inevitable moment when, rapping his left palm with his long right forefinger and craning towards me, he would repeat, with particular emphasis on what was perhaps not the right word, the old copy book maxim, "Sir, honesty is *the* best policy."

Another old friend from Seistan days was the Superintendent of the Residency office, George Moore. Originally I had dug him out of the Brigade office at Lucknow. One morning he said he wanted an hour off to go to the dentist. Noticing him in the afternoon with a smile on his face, but a rather hollow cheek, I asked him how he had fared. "Oh, very well, thank you, and the dentist was very reasonable. He took out four teeth before he came to the right one, but he only charged me five rupees."

Griffith's status was raised from Chief Commissioner to Governor. His elevation affected me inasmuch as it made him the more inclined to confirm an arrangement whereby the Resident in Waziristan was the revisionary court for Jirga trials throughout the southern part of the Province. The work involved was not heavy, especially after I had enhanced one or two sentences which seemed to me to be too light and to have been brought to my notice by the appellants on frivolous grounds, and had dropped a hint to Political Agents that, while I was quite ready for sufficient reason to reverse a decision, I was not disposed ordinarily to reduce a sentence. This move seemed to be well liked by all concerned. Where there had appeared to be a tendency in some quarters to inflict a long enough term of imprisonment to allow for some reduction, the tendency soon became to pass sentences, lighter but sufficient to meet the ends of justice, with tolerable certainty that they would not be reduced.



## WAZIRISTAN

Once, I forget exactly when, Griffith asked me whether I would care to be considered for appointment as Agent to the Governor General for all of the N.W.F. tribal areas. This had always been the Chief Commissioner's technical position in regard to the Political Agencies, but Griffie was perhaps uncertain whether, as a constitutional Governor, he could appropriately continue to be A.G.G. also. After thinking it over I told him that it sounded a fine job, but that I did not think it would work well in practice. All concerned were used to looking to the man at Government House, Peshawar, as the real boss; while a Resident in Waziristan was unavoidable, the other P.As., and men like the Mehtar and the Wali, would hate to have an A.G.G. between them and the boss; and while the Resident could help over a considerable area, and throughout the Province if the Governor liked, within certain spheres such as dealing with revisional applications in Jirga cases, if he became A.G.G., he would always be apt to be away in Chitral when he was wanted in Waziristan and so forth. I did not think Solomon would have considered this the best way of dealing with the baby. I believe that not long afterwards the arrangement was given a trial and then dropped because it did not work.

In the spring of 1933 there was trouble in the air. At Ipi, eighteen miles west of Bannu, there was a faqir, then little known but now notorious. He made off across the Afghan border into Khost and set to work to stir up trouble. News came in that Khostwal tribesmen were planning a raid and the Tochi Scouts were ready to round them up at dawn on the coming Sunday. When I told Pope of this, he kindly suggested that perhaps the Scouts might care to have some Regulars within reach just in case they should be found useful. It seemed prudent to accept the offer, especially as it came from a man who had so much local experience. When the Scouts had committed themselves to the operation, which had been planned as a complete surprise, they found that the Khostwals were expecting them. It transpired that, because of the intended operation, a Saturday night dance at Bannu had been cancelled; so no ices would be wanted; so cream would not be needed; so an order for extra milk had been cancelled; and so it had become widely known that something was on.

Messengers from the Faqir of Ipi came in from Khost and small



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

parties of Wazirs began to drift across the border. They were told not to go, but more went, mostly men of no importance and in dribblets, in a manner which happened to be exactly hit off in a picture in a *Punch* which reached us about then called 'The Spring Offensive'. It was clear that many of the Tochi Wazirs, remembering the warning they had had not to join Nadir Khan in his advance on Kabul and the thoroughly good time they had enjoyed in spite of it, needed a sharp reminder. I thought that a few bombs, even if they did no damage, might do the trick. The Kurram episode of the Paras and Massozai was fresh in memory. But higher authority said no. More Wazirs left and Mahsuds began to move, making rude noises as they passed under the walls of Razmak and close by Datta Khel, without a shot being fired at them. By this time Kohat Military District had been called on to reinforce Thal and to occupy points between Thal and Mirali and, now that another Military District was involved, the direction of affairs passed from Pope to Northern Command at Rawalpindi. I pressed for almost any kind of definite action anywhere, but the decision was in favour of an inactive display in considerable force. More troops were brought into the area and, to get out of their way and onto different communications, I moved to Bannu. I remember that it was a time of broken weather. Morning after morning big flights of geese and cranes on migration northwards were to be seen making for the passes on both sides of the Safed Koh at the top of the Kurram and turning back. To impress the tribesmen squadrons of aircraft were displayed flying low over the Tochi and over Wana. Johnny trotted me out to deliver a warning to a big Jirga. The air display had been nicely timed and just as I was getting to the nasty part of what I had to say the machines came roaring over low down. As soon as they had passed and before the next wave came, a voice said, "Go on; we can just hear you." Finally the affair petered out, but a good opportunity for calling the Wazirs to order had been missed.

Meanwhile Norman Cater, who was Agent to the Governor General for Baluchistan and under whom as acting Foreign Secretary I had worked in Simla for a time in 1920, asked whether I would like, after a few months' leave that was due, to go to Baluchistan as Revenue and Judicial Commissioner. I had also been asked whether I would care to be considered for appointment



## WAZIRISTAN

as A.G.G., Punjab States. Public servants are apt to be a nuisance if they do not accept jobs when they are offered. Even so I think I would have been inclined to ask not to be moved if I had not been fed up over the 'spring offensive' business. I had never had better men to work with than Griffie and Pope and his Staff and Johnny and Packy, and I was getting to know something about the Wazirs and Mahsuds.

I was going home by air and the agents had sent me a pamphlet which stated that it would cost me a lot if my weight including kit was more than 100 kilos. So I packed what seemed a minimum of kit and weighed it and set to work to take off several pounds of what the pamphlet called personal weight. I had just about done the trick when another pamphlet arrived in which it was stated that exactly the weight of luggage I had decided to take could be carried free irrespective of the weight of the passenger.

Maliks came in individually and in groups to say good-bye. A party of Tochi Wazirs said they had two things in particular that they wanted to discuss. Talking with all the earnestness of temperance reformers, they asked whether something could not be done to mitigate the modern curse of—Tea. Government in its generosity gave them allowances which helped them to maintain their position and that was all right as far as food and lodging went. There was a limit to what a man could eat. But tea. There was no end to the number of cups of tea a guest could swallow, and tea meant milk, and sugar too, and they all cost money. The other matter was a question of fact. One of them had said that in recent times one great nation had gone to war with another great nation over (here the speaker patted his breast pocket inside which something crinkled; it must have been a copy of the Pears Agreement) a scrap of paper. Did Government really care all that much about scraps of paper?



## XI

### *Baluchistan*<sup>1</sup>

1933-35

Lieutenant-General Sir Torquhil Matheson, G.O.C.-in-Chief, Western Command, and our very good friend, delighted in calling Quetta 'Aldershot Gone Septic'. With unlimited open upland country as its Salisbury Plain, Chaman as its railhead towards Afghanistan, and Karachi as its Southampton, Quetta, the home of a Staff College which ranked level with Camberley, was the headquarters of the largest striking force in India.

Apart from a Pathan area in the north, the tribesmen of Baluchistan—Baluchis, Brahuis, Marris, Bugtis and others—were less formidable than the tribesmen of the North-West Frontier Province. They had responded to the Sandeman system of tribal self-government. If they had been minded to raid their richer neighbours in Sind, they would have had to be prepared to cross wide areas of desert and would have been exposed to swift action by overwhelming military force.

Service in Baluchistan thus seemed likely to mean a Farewell to Romance in the form of the day-to-day association with soldiers on active occasions which had been the spice of life in the North-West Frontier Province. But we had been in Quetta only a few days when I became involved in a matter of military importance which was destined to become a continuing and increasing interest.

Quetta and the other military stations in Baluchistan had a dry, invigorating climate. English men and women normally felt fit and the children had rosy cheeks. But Kipling had told how 'Jack Barratt went to Quetta . . . that very healthy place', and promptly died there. Year by year Quetta, Chaman, Loralai and Fort Sandeman appeared high up in an official list of the most malarious

<sup>1</sup> Map, page 60.



## BALUCHISTAN

military stations in India. There was also apt to be a lot of bowel trouble in the hot season, especially amongst the rosy-cheeked children.

To deal with these matters, the Government of India and Army H.Q. India had suggested the formation of a joint military and civil committee, of which I found I was the senior civil member. A.H.Q. had allotted a special sum of about £100 to give work a start.

So one morning some twenty more or less V.I.P.s assembled to work out a plan of campaign. After about an hour's talk it was revealed that, inasmuch as £100 had been earmarked for the campaign, Army Audit had ruled that other funds previously spent on work of this kind could no longer be made available for it. This meant that, if we wanted to do much more than before, we must somehow get it done on much less money than before. It took me some little time to grasp this. Then, having taken a look round the room, I suggested that, if we costed the time we had already spent that morning, we might find that we had already got through more than half of the sum available. Perhaps in the circumstances we might as well break off. This created a breeze which helped to clear the air. We also had a bit of luck when a major military exercise, which took troops out into the country for several days and nights, had to be discontinued because a large proportion of the men went down with malaria. As it takes several days for malaria to develop the source of infection must have been in Quetta.

The result was the formation of a working committee with an inner circle of six. These were Anstey the Brigadier General, General Staff; Henry Holland, who ran the C.M.S. Mission hospital in Quetta city; Heb Todd, the Political Agent; Francis, the Canal Engineer; the head of the Railway, whose staff lines were very heavily infected with malaria; and myself. Besides mosquitos, we decided to make war on flies which we suspected of being the main cause of bowel troubles.

We were so fortunate as to obtain the help of Hugh Mulligan from the Central Research Institute at Kasauli near Simla, and later of Harry Sayce, a first-class Sanitary Engineer from the United Provinces. Mulligan was one of those very clever men who can explain anything simply. He also had the gift of making people



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

keen and not ruffling them. His method was to investigate the malaria problem from two sides.

Mosquitos lay their eggs in water. Wherever Mulligan went in or around Quetta or Loralai or Fort Sandeman or elsewhere, he found mosquitos in gutters, or in forgotten tins, or in collections of water of one kind or another, or in streams. Rule one was that, as it takes a mosquito at least a week to hatch from the egg, all casual water must be emptied away or oiled once a week, and all rubbish and dark corners and low growth in which adult mosquitos shelter during the day must be cleared.

The next thing was to discover which of the many kinds of mosquitos was causing malaria in a particular area. It was the female of the species that did the harm. Blood helped her to lay eggs. To make blood flow, she injected saliva and so conveyed germs sucked from one person into the body of another. But not all mosquitos were equally harmful. The culex type might bite and annoy but it was only the anopheles that carried malaria. Anopheles mosquitos could be recognized at a glance because they rest with their heads down and culex do not. Mosquitos when in their under-water stage of development breathe through a tube like an elephant's trunk; and it was because they have to come to the surface to breathe, but cannot pierce a film of oil, that the oiling of water surfaces which could not be dried up was effective. But there were several kinds of anopheles of which one kind would be harmful in one area and another kind in another. One kind might like shade or running water, another might like sunlight or still water. So it would be useless to push vaguely ahead, spending a lot of money, until the enemy had been identified.

Then there was the human end of the business. All round about, and especially in some villages within a few hundred yards of Quetta Cantonment and of the Civil Lines and of the heavily infected railway area, there were crowds of small children with fat protruding bellies. Mulligan would go up to them with a handful of sweets or coppers. They had no fear of him and he would make them chuckle as he tickled their tummies. Up to the age of about eight, children who often got malaria developed enlarged spleens. What Mulligan wanted was to find out whether a child's spleen came down below its ribs and how far. If eight



## BALUCHISTAN

children out of ten had big spleens, their village was classed as 80 per cent infected with malaria. In this way a considerable area could be mapped in a few days, the trend of greater or less intensity observed, and a major source of infection looked for.

Flies were easier game. First there were measures of general sanitation, such as not exposing food to flies, and the use of latrines rather than the nearest piece of empty ground for the purpose for which latrines are intended. Then, for direct war against flies, two methods were effective, especially in dry places and in hot weather. One was, near open latrines or any other place attractive to flies, to put up a screen of hessian like a roller towel, the lower end of which dipped into a trough containing water, sugar and a soluble form of arsenic in weak solution. The flies drank this and died. If chickens ate the dead flies they seemed to lay more eggs. Of course the solution must not be accessible to dogs and other animals. The other method was more artful. It was explained that flies like to lay their eggs in heaps of manure or other filth. After the egg, the next stage in the life cycle was that the grubs, on hatching out, had to pass some time in the ground. If a heap of filth was placed on a cement platform, with a small channel of water between the heap and the edges of the platform, the grubs were drowned.

The general policy we laid down was to put primary responsibility for cleaning up individual areas not on the doctors and engineers, but on executive officers such as the C.O.s of units. They could call on the doctors and engineers for help and advice as needed. To stimulate and guide effort, the working committee got out a short pamphlet in several languages. This pointed out that the prevention of malaria was in large degree a matter of not allowing even very small quantities of water to remain undrained or unboiled for more than a few days at a time, and that flies, which are easily disposed of in a dry climate, were nasty things because they were in the habit of passing much of their time alternately on human excreta and on human food. Seeing this pamphlet, a senior doctor brought me a copy. He said the facts were perfectly true, but would people, and especially ladies, like to be told them?

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. One day, when the weather was beginning to warm up and there were plenty of flies



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

about, Lorraine gave a large purdah party to the Indian ladies of Quetta. Our garden measured two hundred yards square. There were plenty of sugary things on the tables. One of the ladies remarked that there seemed to be something odd about the party. Then she tumbled to the fact that there were no flies.

Between them Mulligan and Sayce worked out plans for extensive improvements, some of which were put in hand without delay. In particular Sayce disliked the fact that, because there was not a sufficient water supply, the mains were empty part of the day and so tended to suck in through leaky joints any infection there might be in the soil. The difficulty was likely to be how to obtain sanction for the expenditure which would be involved. The solution was to be provided in a drastic and tragic way.

Quetta had a most flourishing Club. In return for a subscription of about £20 a year, and much less for members of the same family after the first, it provided free tennis including balls, golf, rackets, squash, polo, hunting and many other delights, and dances at a charge of about half a crown. Owing to lack of scent on the dry hard ground the hunt was usually a drag.

There were also race meetings, of which I was invited to be a Steward. The idea was that I might encourage local landowners to run their ponies in special races which were needed to bulk out the programme. I remember an embarrassing moment. The Stewards, not quite liking the form of the horses of a certain owner who had come from afar, but not being able to put a finger on anything very definite, had invited him to appear before them after the last race. We were sitting round a long table in a room under the grandstand looking as solemn as we could, when in he came twirling his hat. Just then the band struck up 'God Save the King'. Up we all rose, as if to greet him. I heard of another incident from Anstey, our Senior Steward. On Saturday there had been a race for local ponies which nobody had seemed to want to win. On Monday, Anstey was in his office when he heard that a riding boy wanted to see him. In he came and in a worked-up state said, "Sahib, you saw the second race on Saturday. You saw me try to stop my horse. You saw me fail, and win. Now I've been sacked by my owner. I want British Justice."

By the kindness of the Royal Air Force, I was able to spend several days in Mekran, between Karachi and the Persian border.



## BALUCHISTAN

The machines were D.H.9A's which, being open and having a top speed of about ninety miles an hour, were excellent for observation. The Mekran coast was the home of tribesmen whom Alexander the Great's historian called the Ichthyophagi and who were still known as the *mahi-khuran* or Fish-eaters. While Alexander with his cavalry and camelry and infantry had marched along the coast, his Admiral Nearchus had sailed from the mouths of the Indus south of Karachi, through the waters in which the Ichthyophagi fished. There never was such a fishy land. The people and the cats and the cows lived on fish and the beaches reeked with rotting piles of it.

There is an old fable that, when the creation of the world was almost finished, the bits of material that were left over were thrown down in a heap and called Mekran. Yet to the *mahi-khuran* this desert sea-board was home; and sixty miles inland there was a valley, equally torrid and inhospitable and bare of vegetation except for some patches of date trees, which also to its inhabitants was home. I was told that a particularly rigorous and effective form of punishment for crime was to order a fish-eater to spend some weeks in the date country and vice versa.

In the course of our tour one of the aircraft broke a tail-skid which, working in all directions like a wrist, threatened to be awkward to replace. After some difficulty we procured the services of the village blacksmith. With nothing beyond a hammer, a very small anvil and a piece of old rail, he managed somehow to knock up and to fit a new skid which survived several landings on the way back to Quetta. The chief difficulty of the trip was to identify the emergency landing grounds we had to use. I thought that this difficulty might be overcome by sowing long lines and arrows of mesquite which grew well under similar dry conditions in D.I.K.

One day I visited a lonely station near Karachi where devoted Indian scientists were working on the problem of why from time to time locusts increase and multiply exceedingly. In Afghanistan I had seen by the side of a road a line of trees of which every twig was coral-red with what appeared to be strange flowers but were locusts. In the Kurram I had seen the summer sky suddenly become dark with billions of locusts and had joined villagers who had turned out with empty tins and bits of wood as drum-sticks, to



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

scare the pests from their crops and fruit trees. The scientists had discovered that, after a locust plague had faded out, a very small proportion survived, mostly in an attenuated form, in sandy desert areas. As to the problem of why from time to time the few survivors developed into vast swarms, there seemed to be similar questions at issue in regard to other animals such as lemmings and other forms of life such as the bacteria which cause various diseases.

The Quetta plain was a delightful place for an early morning ride. As spring came on orchards of peach, apricot, almond, pear, apple and pomegranate broke into blossom varied by the fresh green of willows and the sage green of tamarisks. Throughout the highlands of Baluchistan and of south-western Afghanistan and in Persia the rainfall is slight and the soil is permeable by water to a great depth. Faced by these conditions human ingenuity had devised a peculiar system of irrigation which does not appear to have been developed in any other part of the world. With an eye for the lie of the land and with a technical skill developed through many generations, villagers would first look for a spot where the general trend of the hill slopes fringing a plain suggested that rain and snow which had fallen on the hill-sides might be seeping away in a certain direction and that there might be an impervious stratum of rock or clay underneath. The first step was to sink shafts, sometimes to the depth of several hundred feet, to prove the water supply. A shaft would be about three feet in diameter, the right size for a man to climb up and down with the help of a rope, his back up against one side of the shaft and his toes dug into niches on the other side. The spoil was brought up in goat skins worked by a rough wooden windlass. Water having been proved, the head worker, who was called the *ustad* or headmaster, would estimate by eye the place, possibly a mile or more away, where an underground channel conveying the water from the 'mother' well would cut the surface of the ground. Then a tunnel just large enough for a smallish man to pass along in a stooping position would be cleared, chimneys being sunk at intervals for the removal of the spoil. If the quantity of water was not sufficient for continuous irrigation, a puddled pond or *hauz* would be constructed. From this, when full, the water was led onto the fields. Edward Noel investigated this *karez*



## BALUCHISTAN

method of irrigation with his usual thoroughness. In an article in the Central Asian Journal of May, 1944, he estimated that, by and large, *karez*es yield a very handsome profit on capital cost. Special advantages of the method are the purity and coolness of the water, little seasonal variation in quantity, the ease with which fallows can be arranged in regions of little water and much land, and above all less tendency to over-water than in areas of normal canal irrigation.

Every day during the hot weather complete trains of insulated wagons left Chaman and Quetta carrying to Calcutta and other distant destinations grapes, peaches and many other kinds of fruit. In Kandahar a hundredweight of grapes could be bought for half a crown and by the time the grapes had reached Chaman and paid Afghan export duty the cost was still only a penny a pound. They were lovely grapes.

Twenty years earlier Sir Albert Howard had given a good start to an experimental fruit farm on the outskirts of Quetta. This was now in the able hands of Mustafa Khan. Between us we attacked two problems. The first was to fix on four or five varieties of peaches to supply distant Indian markets. The chief points seemed to be that they must look well, be of a popular size, travel well, include earlies, middle seasons and lates, and also taste good, although in commercial fruit this seems often to be a minor consideration. With these objects in view Mustafa was experimenting with more than a hundred different varieties of peach which had been obtained from various sources. It was noticeable, not only in the case of peaches, that stocks which had been obtained from the drier parts of the U.S.A. did well on the Baluchistan plateau. The likely explanation was said to be that many fruits had originated in the Turkestan region where the climate is of the continental type, dry and with extremes of heat and cold. In course of time peaches and other fruits had reached England and other places in western Europe and had been taken on to the maritime areas of the eastern United States. When it was found that the varieties which did well near the sea did not succeed so well far inland, fresh stocks had been imported direct from Turkestan into the drier areas of the United States and improved there. Thus it was via the United States that varieties which were doing particularly well in Quetta had reached



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Baluchistan from Turkestan which was only a few hundred miles away to the north. One useful variety we discovered by chance. In my garden opposite the Quetta Residency there were two very old peach trees almost past bearing fruit and diseased, but very early. Grafts from these did well and within a few years the variety which was given my name, as its origin was unknown, became established commercially.

The second problem was how to bridge the gap between the experimental establishment run on scientific lines and the owners of fruit gardens. They were beginning to realize that high mud walls round orchards were more apt to produce frost-pockets than to keep the cold out. But they were apt to be shy of trying new varieties and to grow far too many trees to the acre. Luckily there were several municipal gardens, at Pishin and other places, where we were able to arrange for approved varieties to be tried out under semi-commercial conditions and before the eyes of the owners of many of the small commercial gardens, who could be shown figures of costs and sales. This could not be done so well in the Quetta experimental garden for which Government wisely insisted that, while proper accounts of expenditure and income must be kept, the chief aim must not be profit but experiment. As soon as definite results had been obtained with one set of experiments, it was time to pass on to another. Even so the growing of stocks for distribution at a charge of only a few pence a tree brought in good money.

The curse of dry regions is the goat, but for which much of Baluchistan might have been covered with bushy and grassy jungle and trees. This was clear from the vegetation—wild roses, berberis, eremurus, aromatic herbs and tall grasses—inside a fence which enclosed the water works catchment area a few miles above Quetta. The hill slopes outside the fence were bare.

For the large Indian population of Quetta and the other cantonments, the normal Indian system of law was in force, but the people of the countryside were used to trial by jirga. In India, the jirga system of trial had its critics. Politicians, many of whom were barristers, were naturally suspicious of a legal system which did not permit counsel to appear in trials. The Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council at that time was that fine statesman Sir N. N. Sirkar, who had been the shining light of the



## BALUCHISTAN

Calcutta Bar. Norman Cater was on leave and I was acting as A.G.G. Sir N. N. decided to visit Quetta and accepted my invitation to stay at the Residency. In order that he and anybody who came to see him might feel quite free of any sort of official interference, I arranged a reception tent for him in a quiet part of the garden.

After a day or two, Sir N. N. said he would like to visit the central jail, which was about twenty miles away on the road down to Sibi. He came back with a broad grin on his face. He said that, while he was at the jail, he had picked out a pleasant looking man and asked him, through an interpreter, why he was there. Answer, "For murder." "Had you killed the man?" Answer, "Yes." On picking out a second man at random the same question had produced the same reply. Thinking this strangely unlike his experience of jail inspections in India, he picked out a third prisoner at random and, having put the same question, received the reply "What a ridiculous question. He richly deserved it." Sir N. N. had enjoyed his day. He did not seem to want any great change in local methods of doing justice.

In Quetta there were some distinguished links with earlier times. Mr. Bux, who had been Sandeman's personal servant, was the uncrowned but acknowledged king of the whole of the servant community, who were said to support his dignity with small voluntary subscriptions. On state occasions he appeared in the frock coat uniform of Risaldar Major of some no longer existent Levy Corps of which he was a pensioner, his chest plastered with large medals of special design which had been conferred on him by Viceroys. Dating from the same period and still a valued counsellor of A.G.G.s and a quiet but powerful influence for good was Rai Bahadur Jamiat Rai C.I.E. who had been on Sandeman's staff. Amongst Englishmen the doyen was the retired Inspector General of Police Frank Beaty, still boisterous and a good and very keen shot. Kipling may have had him in mind as one of his sources for Strickland, and also for Kim who, as a child and Friend of All the World, bestrode the great gun Zam Zammah in Lahore.

In June, when the temperature in Quetta rose to about 100° F. —it was alleged that, if more than 100° F. were to be recognized officially, Quetta would cease to be classifiable as a second class



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

hill station for British troops and their families—the A.G.G. would move up to Ziarat, about half-way to Fort Sandeman. This was a good arrangement. At Ziarat he was in touch with the population and officials of the northern part of the Province and was able less formally than in Quetta to get to know military and political officers who were glad to spend a few days in the cool as his guests. On the way back in the autumn he would spend two or three days in a valley which provided the best chikor shooting in the Province. Ziarat was also not far from some fishing where mahseer came well to a small spoon or a fly. The best I had was a twelve-pounder on a March Brown.

Towards Christmas a further move was made down the Bolan Pass to Sibi. The big event of the political year would be the Shahi (royal) Jirga at Sibi in February.

Norman Cater invited us to join him in his Christmas shooting camp by the side of a big shallow lake just north of the Indus in Sind. The geese and duck were apt to fly high because the lake was the home of an amphibian tribe who made their living by fowling and fishing. They took most of their birds—especially coot whose dark flesh was preferred by many of the local people to duck and which are apt to fly low—in nets stretched on poles. Another method they adopted was to get birds used to baskets and gourds floating on the water. Then they would go in themselves, with their heads hidden under baskets and gourds, and pull birds down under water by the legs. On the way back from camp we visited the head-works of the Sukkur Barrage canal system which, in an almost rainless area, waters lands more extensive than the whole of the irrigated area of Egypt.

In Sind, not far from the Baluchistan border, was the town of Shikarpur. Some years before the first World War a young doctor named Henry Holland, already mentioned in connection with health work, went out to join the C.M.S. Mission at Quetta. Having a great talent for eye work and knowing that—probably as the result of the combination of glare and dust and flies—the great need of the people of Sind was that he should come over and help them, he visited Shikarpur several years in succession. A rich Hindu merchant was so much impressed by his personality and work that he left by will a large caravanserai in Shikarpur as a centre for Henry's medical work and some £15,000 by way of



endowment. Unfortunately control of the serai and of the endowment had not been made over completely and before long the serai was in ruins and much of the endowment had ebbed away. To Henry—who in course of time became Sir Henry, but few people probably know when, because seldom can the grant of a knighthood both have been so appropriate and have affected a man so little—such trials were a challenge. Shortish, tough, merry, grey-haired, galvanic, it seemed that to him life, and work, and prayer which has been said to be the realization of the Presence of God, were all the same thing. One day a tribesman by way of identifying him described him to me as ‘The man who walks hand in hand with God’.

Henry invited me to stay with him. After an early breakfast he took me in what might once have been a third-hand Ford car through bumpy streets deep in dust to the serai, shrilling greetings to his many friends on the way. Arrived there he led the way into a large bare and not over-clean room which served as reception office, waiting hall, church and examination clinic. The day’s work began with his reading in Sindhi one of the New Testament accounts of the healing of the sick and blind, followed by the Lord’s Prayer and two other short prayers. At the end of each prayer all present—men, women and children, Christian, Hindu and Mahomedan—uttered a fervid *Amin*. Then they came forward one by one to be examined. Having seen in Henry’s hospital at Quetta large jam jars full of extracted cataracts, I was particularly interested in the eye cases. Henry, keyed up to a high pitch of enthusiasm (which, to quote the dictionary, means ‘to be inspired or possessed by the god, be rapt, be in ecstasy’) and of perceptive energy, diagnosed case after case so rapidly that Mrs. Holland, seated at his side, was writing her wrist off taking down his decisions and instructions. To those who were fit for operation he said ‘stay’, or gave a date; others he told to come again next year when the cataract might be ripe for operation; or, if the case was inoperable, he laid his hand on the patient’s head and said, “May God be your Helper.” When the room had been emptied the outer door was again opened, there was another short service, again there were cries of *Amin*, and the process of diagnosis was repeated. I noticed that confidence in Henry was so complete that, with the nobility of men and women who are poor and in



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

great need, those who learned that nothing could be done for them seemed to go away content.

The operating theatre was part room where an abdominal operation was being done (Henry would dart across from time to time to see that all was going well) and part open veranda. The cataract cases were got ready on four hard tables. A ward servant or a relation would come up leading a patient whose eye had already been treated with atropine, or carrying him pick-a-back, which was considered a huge joke. Cases which had just been operated on would be removed in the same manner all to the accompaniment of a stream of banter. Henry took the more difficult cases. Amongst his helpers were eye specialists who had come from America to watch his methods and gain experience. I twice saw Henry at a signal leave his patient from whose eye he had just removed a cataract as quickly and as easily as if he had been shelling peas, spend a few moments putting right the operation which the surgeon had found to be beyond him, crack a little joke, and go back to his own patient for whom also he had his joke ready.

The nursing ward for cases which had been operated on was a ruined part of the serai. Old tarpaulins and bits of canvas propped up on sticks served for a roof and the dusty mud floor in place of bedsteads. The bodies of patients were almost touching. Henry thought it a good joke that, where he could move fairly easily, I had to bend double. He knew each patient's name and had the right joke or prayer ready for each. It seemed that with him anti-sepsis was in chief measure a matter of the spirit and that he had decided that, with not very much money available, he could do more good by treating all who needed his skill, and helping them to know to the point of conviction that by the mercy of God they would recover, than by spending what money he had on more elaborate arrangements for fewer cases. Statistics showed that, out of the thousands of cataracts he had collected in his jam jars in the course of many years, 97 per cent represented cases in which the result had been success. Some few years ago, when presenting to Sir Henry Holland the Central Asian Society's medal, the President, Lord Wavell, related that an American doctor who had come out to work with Henry had invited him to come to work in America. The terms would be that Henry might name



## BALUCHISTAN

any salary he liked and it would be doubled. Henry had replied that the Church Missionary Society paid a certain modest salary, and that was sufficient for his needs.

Some ten years later I again saw him at Shikarpur, operating just as before on his seventieth birthday. Again, eleven years later still, he and Lady Holland were flying out to Shikarpur to help their sons Harry and Ronnie, with American helpers as before, to carry on the same work. For January 4th to March 10th, 1956, the Shikarpur figures were cataract operations 1,269 (96 per cent successful), other eye operations 820, major surgery 180.

While the main branches of the Sukkur Barrage canal system stretched forward through Sind like the fingers of the right hand, a part of the irrigated area, no larger in proportion to the whole than part of the little finger, lay on the Baluchistan side of a line of frontier which had been drawn arbitrarily through the desert plain. Of this area the big-boned Gerald Curtis was in charge as colonization officer. It was in the course of days spent riding about his hundred and fifty square miles that I began to realize the extent of the whole Sukkur Barrage project and of the tasks which the engineers and settlement and revenue and other civil officers had undertaken. It was not as if in Gerald's colony it had been a matter of supplying water to a few large landowners and collecting land revenue and water rate from them. First it had been necessary to attract applicants for land from every part of Baluchistan, then to stem the rush of applicants when it set in and to distribute the land in fair shares. Village sites must be chosen and laid out with allowance for future mosques, temples, bazaars, schools, hospitals and offices. Roads must be aligned and the right kinds of trees to shade them chosen and planted, an alignment decided for a possible future railway, and land reserved for an experimental farm and nurseries and for growing timber trees and firewood. Much would depend in the future on whether, from the start, law and justice had been administered with a sympathetic but sufficiently firm hand. There were robbers about who found good shelter in the towering crops of maize and millet which shot up from the virgin soil and there were rum-runners who must be dealt with. To spoil their market, lawful liquor was made available for the time being at minimum cost. Above all, villages and groups of villages must be led in the direction of



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

developing methods of local self-government—not easy in view of the many different tribal origins of the colonists. Rights in land, the grant of tenancies, and the produce of the land field by field, must be recorded accurately and minutely. A colonization officer has his hands full but his work is rewarding.

After life in Quetta, Sibi, at the foot of the Bolan Pass and on the edge of a flat and mostly desert plain which stretched for more than a hundred miles towards the Indus, was a complete change. Here the tribesmen of Baluchistan had since the days of Sandeman assembled every year in February to discuss at the Shahi Jirga disputes which they had been unable to settle locally. Far away towards Karachi lay Bela, feudatory of the Kelat State. When Sandeman died there in 1892, the Ruler of Kelat had threatened war if Bela should persist in its wish to be the place of burial.

In winter the Khan of Kelat moved down to Dadar near Sibi and with him came Teddy Wakefield and Lalage. All three were greatly interested in the breeding of horses and in racing them at Quetta. Teddy had a lot of work on his hands, but Lalage and Lorraine and I spent many early mornings and afternoons riding over the broken ground of the Sibi plain.

In January, 1935, Lorraine died.

Spring in Quetta was keen and lovely as before. The Quetta Hunt finished off their season with a point to point and I attended several school prize-givings. Health work was going well. Mulligan had located the worst areas of malaria infection, identified the species of mosquitos which did most harm, and shown how they should be dealt with. Sayce, who was living with me, was putting the final touches to a full report in which he showed how the general sanitation of Quetta could be improved. Francis was well ahead with improved irrigation and drainage schemes and works. In accordance with his kindly custom Norman Cater gave an Empire Day party for a thousand Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. It was an oppressive evening. My bungalow, like most of the old buildings in that part of Quetta, had thick mud walls which the engineer concerned had said were too rotten to admit of any considerable alterations to the house. After dinner I told Sayce I had the pip and suggested we should go along and look up friends with a view to a chat and a drink. He said he felt much as I did; but in an hour or two he would have his report finished and



signed, so I had better go out by myself. He showed me a very large scale plan of the city on which he had marked water supplies and drains as they were and as they should be, and areas which owing to the difficulty of freeing them from malaria should be condemned as building sites. I got to bed about one o'clock. Two hours later I woke suddenly. My bed was heaving up and down and was being shaken from side to side. I made for the window, but it was covered in with fly-proof gauze, and for the bathroom door, but it was stuck. So also was the door into the house. The earth tremors became more frequent and more violent. At a second attempt I succeeded in making a hole in the window gauze and had just jumped out onto the ground outside when something knocked me down. The mud wall of the house fell on top of me and the corrugated iron roof came shooting down a few inches clear of my head. I could touch the edge of it with my hand. There were more shocks and more wall fell on me. Then from the direction of the city came surge after surge of wails which gradually faded away. After a time my servants started to look round the house with lamps and I was able to let them know where I was. I asked them not to go on pulling away the heaps of mud brick which were holding up the corrugated roof, but to try to find another way in, which in the course of time they did. We tried to find Sayce but the whole of the part of the house where he slept had collapsed inwards and little could be done until a military working party arrived. Even then it took them hours to dig down through the piles of mud wall and mud brick. Meanwhile rescue work in the city had to be organized. I managed to get into the room where Sayce had been working the night before and it was with the help of his big plan of the city that before dawn operations were being planned. Francis also was overwhelmed, but his papers were saved. It was on the basis of the work of Mulligan, Sayce and Francis that a new Quetta was destined to be built.

Directed and inspired by General Karslake and Brigadier Chope, the Army rose magnificently to the occasion. So also did civilians of every class and creed. Old Diwan Jamiat Rai, his broken arm in a sling, brought peace and consolation wherever he passed. Led by Hogg, fifty Rover Scouts from Lahore worked in gas masks, removing putrid corpses—there were many thousands of



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

them—from the ruins of the town and, when they were exhausted, their place was taken by fifty more. In the hospitals and hospital camps officers' wives, cheerfully and without flinching, carried out all sorts of duties, many of them revolting. A Brahmin had been crushed under the ruins of his house. His leg had been amputated at the thigh and for several days he had been lying, nursed by British orderlies. One day he asked for the chaplain, to whom he said, "All my life I have been what you might call a religious man. The work I have seen done in this hospital is the most God-like thing I have ever seen done by man for man."

I was invalided to England.



## XII

### *Sikkim*<sup>1</sup>

1935-45

I RETURNED from leave in England via Kenya. Flying at a moderate height, it was possible to get some idea of the vastness of the Sudan. In northern Uganda the pilot circled low to give us a sight of a herd of a thousand elephants. The cows and calves took little notice of the aircraft, but the big bulls seemed to be showing off by flapping their ears at us. In the Victoria Nyanza I saw hundreds of hippos. It was stimulating to ride early in the morning to the milking past a herd of rhino. Contrasts with India which struck me were the tremendous amount of experiment and development, under severely practical conditions, which was being done by settlers, and the impression that the administration of the country was being skimped. It did not seem that the status and prospects of the Kenya Civil Service would bear comparison with the Sudan Civil or the I.C.S.

I went on from Mombasa by sea. At Bombay I learned that Harry Williamson had recently died in Lhasa and that I was to succeed him as Political Officer in Sikkim. Williamson was a man of great Central Asian experience who would be difficult to replace. This does not mean that he would necessarily be a difficult man to follow. Good men are apt to make work easy for their successors.

Passing through Delhi I had talks with Aubrey Metcalfe, the Foreign Secretary, and with Olaf Caroe. Olaf had succeeded Aubrey as Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar and was also destined to succeed him as Foreign Secretary. Sir Charles Bell in his writings accuses the Government of India of his time of having treated the North-East Frontier as the Cinderella of the Foreign Department. I gathered from Aubrey and Olaf that more interest was now being taken in that part of the world.

From now on for nearly ten years I was to be concerned with

<sup>1</sup> Map, page 18.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

the affairs of three separate areas. In Sikkim, a self-governing State in India, I was in the position of a Resident; with regard to Bhutan, an independent country with the exception that she had placed her foreign relations in the hands of India, my functions were advisory; while in Tibet my position was vaguely diplomatic. Although it will not be possible to avoid some criss-crossing, I will try to deal with each of these areas separately.

Sikkim, with its 2,800 square miles of territory, is about one-third of the size of Wales. It extends from the summits of Kanchenjunga on the west, where it marches with Nepal, to the borders of Tibet and Bhutan on the north and east. To the south lies the Indian District of Darjeeling. A hundred years ago the population of Sikkim consisted chiefly of people of Tibetan stock, and of Lepchas, who are aboriginal forest-dwellers, speak their own language and are animists by religion. Since then many thousands of Nepalese, mainly Hindu by religion, have settled in the southern parts of Sikkim, which formerly had for the most part been forest. The political importance of Sikkim is in part due to the facts that it affords good routes into Tibet at (from east to west) the Jelap La, the Nathu La and the Sebu La, and that it blocks the extension of Nepalese influence towards Bhutan. The present population of Sikkim is some 130,000, the majority of whom are Nepalese.

The development of Sikkim into a reasonably efficient State had been the work of Claude White, who was Political Officer for nearly twenty years. Originally an engineer of the Public Works Department, he opened up tracks through the densely forested hills, encouraged the development of a simple form of law and justice, started hospitals and schools, registered rights in land, and was in short a pioneer of a type excellently suited to the place and time. All who remembered him spoke of him with real affection. Half a mile from the modest Palace of the Maharaja, he built for himself and his successors a house, known as the Residency, which was perhaps the most attractive medium-sized home in the whole of India. Its terraced garden, rich in tree-ferns and local orchids, faced westwards across a deep valley towards Kanchenjunga.

White had been succeeded in 1908 by Charles Bell, of Win-



## SIKKIM

chester, New College and the Indian Civil Service. White had encouraged industrious immigrants from Nepal to settle in the almost unpopulated southern areas of the State. Bell, an expert in land administration, had, during his twelve years of office, checked their spread into the northern areas of the State.

In 1914 there had been no wheeled transport in Sikkim but now a road, motorable with some difficulty, ran for seventy miles from Siliguri to Gangtok, the capital of the State. As we climbed the last steep hill, the great range of Kanchenjunga came in sight. At Gangtok there was a wealth of the pink double blossom of the winter cherry and of the great white down-hanging blooms of datura. Inside the gate of the Residency pink tree-dahlias waved against a background of tree-ferns. I was welcomed by the sons and Counsellors of the Maharaja, who exchanged white silk scarves in Tibetan fashion. Many of those present were the sons of old friends. The welcome was so warm that I found it difficult to realize that twenty-one years had passed since I had last been on the North-East Frontier.

Maharaja Sidkeong Trulku, who had succeeded his father in 1914, had died before the end of that year and had been succeeded by his half-brother Trashi Namgyal. The Maharani who, according to the Sikkim tradition, was the daughter of a noble family in Lhasa, was then in Tibet. They had an outstandingly fine family of three boys and three girls, all of school age.

After a few days I went off on tour down the Teesta valley. I had forgotten most of what I had ever known of the Tibetan language. A thing which puzzled me was that what seemed to my ears to be identical sounds were spelt in different ways. I was also troubled by the fact that the available dictionaries failed to distinguish between words little used except in books, or in philosophical discussion, and those current in every-day talk, and by a lack of model conversations on everyday topics. This was the beginning of an interesting study. By the time I left Sikkim ten years later it had resulted in several books and it is still far from complete.

Kalimpong, which had once been part of Bhutan but had been included in Bengal after the Bhutan war of 1865, had grown greatly since 1914. Under the hands of Dr. Graham (who had, since I last met him, been Moderator of the Church of Scotland) and of the late Mrs. Graham, what had originally been a small



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Scottish Presbyterian Mission had expanded in many directions. A lace-making school founded by Mrs. Graham had developed into the Kalimpong Arts and Crafts, which now undertook all sorts of work, from building to Christmas cards; there was a large hospital and a colony for lepers; and the long hillside above the bazaar was covered more closely than before with the church, schools and boarding houses of the Kalimpong Homes, in which six hundred children of all ages, from a few weeks up to the end of school age, were being educated. The children were mostly of mixed Anglo-Indian parentage. Each boarding house was in the charge of two 'Aunties' straight from Scotland. There were no servants.

Near to Dr. Graham lived Raja Dorji, chief minister to the Maharaja of Bhutan, and his wife, Rani Chuni Dorji, sister of the Maharaja of Sikkim, with their three sons and two daughters. It was a few days after the beginning of the Christmas holidays. I had noticed that the Maharaja's children at Gangtok were having rather a dull time. After talking things over with Raja Dorji and Rani Chuni, I suggested that we should all go off to the seaside near Puri, between Calcutta and Madras. Luckily I merely told the Government of India that we were going there. As they did not jib, I took heart of grace and during the rest of my service I never asked for formal permission to go anywhere.

Along the eastern coast of India the sandy shore shelves gradually and from hundreds of miles of open sea, even on a calm day, great rollers surge in unceasingly. The water is deliciously warm even in January. But the safety of a couple of dozen people including small children, all in the water together and very few of them able to swim, presented a problem. This was solved by attaching permanently to each person a fisherman who was responsible for the safety of his charge after each wave. They were grand swimmers. Without a surf-board they would come planing in shorewards on the crests of the breakers.

In March I had my first experience of a houseful at the Residency, when members of the 1936 British Everest Expedition came to stay. The organization of the Expedition was in the hands of Guy Rutledge, who had recently retired from the Indian Civil Service, and of C. J. Morris. Amongst those who were expected to climb highest were Eric Shipton, Frank Smythe and P. Wyn



## SIKKIM

Harris. For the first time the Expedition had planned to approach the mountain via north Sikkim. Previous expeditions had travelled via the Chumbi Valley and Phari in Tibet. The Maharaja ordered that they should be given all possible help. I felt a personal interest in Everest Expeditions because George Mallory, who may or may not have reached the actual summit in 1924, had been my fag at school. I value the copy of 'Everest: The Unfinished Adventure' which Rutledge gave me. Weather cut short the 1936 attempt, but it was on the efforts of the earlier expeditions that the great success of 1953 was founded. (I read the news on Coronation Day when we were on our way to see the Queen leave Buckingham Palace for Westminster Abbey.)

After the middle of the summer of 1936 I saw little of Sikkim for nearly two years. It was decided that I should visit Lhasa, to carry on from where Williamson had been obliged to leave off. We were only four days on our way when I became unwell. In Lhasa the symptoms became worse and, after arriving back in Sikkim in the spring of 1937, I went on leave to England. Soon after I had returned to Sikkim late in 1937, I again broke down and Dr. Hendricks, the Residency Surgeon, took me down to Calcutta. Not long before that Hendricks himself had been seriously ill. Failing to get any better at the Presidency General Hospital in Calcutta, he had insisted on leaving it and had been taken in at the School of Tropical Medicine, where he had been cured. So it was to the Tropical School that he took me.

There I saw medical work such as I had never dreamed of. At the head of affairs was Dr. Ram Nath Chopra, a Kashmir subject by birth, with Everard Napier as his second in command. There was nothing luxurious about the hospital. Few of the patients, most of whom were Indian, seemed to be above the poverty line. Nor was the position of the small cubicle which I occupied ideal. The traffic of Central Avenue, the main thoroughfare of the non-European part of Calcutta, roared outside, while in the very middle of the three-storied building was a ward in which suffering babies howled day and night. It was the methods of the School, and the staff, that were magnificent.

The main object of the School was research. There was no jumping at conclusions. On admission a patient was put through test after test. If the result of a test was negative, it was repeated



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

time after time. Wassermann reaction, red and white corpuscles, blood-pressures and the names of various worms and other parasites became familiar terms. As a minimum such tests were ordinarily continued for ten days and repeated from time to time. A Bournemouth doctor told me that in his own case, which had not been a difficult one, the cost of the tests conducted on him during the first few days would, at English pre-war rates, have been more than a hundred guineas.

I had met Chopra some time before at the Calcutta races and had thought of him much as of other men. In his own wards he was the personification of the divine and tender art of healing.

In the hospital the presiding genius was Miss North—as bulky, red-faced, shrill-voiced and kind an angel as I have ever met. She chased her nurses and they loved her. And, from a patient's point of view, I doubt whether there could be better nurses than Miss North's staff. Almost all of them were Anglo-Indian by birth and all except a few were still under training.

Altogether at different times I spent many weeks as a patient at the Tropical School. The hospital authorities were understanding in allowing my clerks to visit me at any time so that I could get through my work; and the Government of India were equally understanding in not worrying as to where I was, so long as the work was done and nothing went wrong. In diet the hospital authorities were quick to allow for the fact that different things suit different people. Once a day the Indian chef came round to ask what I would like. He was allowed to charge me what he thought fit, subject to a maximum of a shilling a meal.

On returning to Sikkim from leave, I had found the lower regions of the State in the grip of what had been diagnosed as kala-azar (black plague). This is a disease not unlike malaria in its symptoms, but more deadly and debilitating in its effects. It was said to be due not to a mosquito, but to a sand-fly. This is a misleading name because, although the sand-fly may inhabit dry sandy places, it breeds in damp ones. Luckily for Sikkim, kala-azar, and the anæmias of pregnancy, were Everard Napier's long suits. At Hendricks' invitation, Napier made time to visit Sikkim and between them they planned an outstandingly successful campaign. In one of the worst infected areas, around Rungpo in the Teesta valley, Hendricks established a two hundred and fifty



## SIKKIM

bed temporary hospital in which he and his assistants did great work. It was built mostly of the stems and leaves of bamboo at a total cost of six shillings a bed. At first the local people were shy of attending. Their attitude changed when one of the landlords fell very seriously ill and was cured.

There was need for economy. With a population of some 130,000 and a revenue from all sources of £40,000 a year, the total of taxation levied by the Sikkim State per head of population amounted to about as much as the average inhabitant of the United Kingdom pays on account of wireless licences.

The Tibetan name for Sikkim is Denjong—the Country of Rice. Up to 6,000 feet narrow rice fields, few of them larger than a tennis court, have been terraced in the steep hillsides. The local rainfall may be anything from 100 to 200 inches in the year, but little rain falls in winter and spring. So the rice is first sown thickly in beds and is transplanted in summer into the fields. Each field is fed by a tiny runnel of water from a stream, or by the overflow from the field above it. There are very many varieties of rice and all of them are considered to be superior to the rice of the plains of India. Unlike the rice which we buy in England, in India the skin of the grain is not removed by ‘polishing’. If it were, it would lose its flavour and people whose staple diet is rice would suffer from the deficiency disease called beri-beri.

Sikkim produces also maize and wheat and barley. Recently potatoes, which mature just at the right time for planting in the plains of India, have become an important export. But the chief exports are loose-skinned oranges. In the autumn many hundreds of porters come in from Nepal to carry the fruit to a central market at Rungpo which is devoted entirely to oranges. The peoples of different regions have various ideas as to how a load may best be carried. For oranges the Nepalese use funnel-shaped baskets, narrow at the bottom and broad at the top. They believe in starting young, and beside a man carrying as much as two hundred pounds may be seen small children each carrying a few pounds. As they grow up, they become able to carry bigger and bigger loads. There are tales of a cottage piano being carried in Darjeeling by one woman.

What a Political Officer in an Indian State usually aimed at was to interfere as little as possible, but to be able to give sensible advice



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

if it was asked for. This meant that he needed to know his State and its leading men and its peoples and that time spent on tour was not wasted. In Sikkim I could have toured for ever. From the Residency at Gangtok the bridle-road which led to north Sikkim and towards Everest rose gently for three miles. Then it plunged down to Dikchu, the Devil's Water, where the Teesta river swirled through a narrow gorge. Here, if bound for Lepcha Land, the traveller had his first introduction to a cane bridge. From two thick ropes made of cane thinner ropes set at wide intervals led down to support a line of single planks which served as footway. Farther on towards north Sikkim the road passed under great forest trees. On the right rose a thousand-foot sheer cliff. From it shot out a jet of water:

And like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A few miles farther on there was a steep drop towards the Teesta. On the other side of the river the eastern slopes of Kanchenjunga rose mightily 25,000 feet towards the sky. In the middle distance stood, detached in the middle of the valley, a reddish flat-topped mass. It was here that, according to Lepcha legend, the Ark had come to rest after the Flood. A few miles more, and we were at the junction of the Lachen, the river of the Great Pass, and the Lachung, the river of the Small Pass.

Lachung was the home of two Finnish lady missionaries. Perhaps they had made little headway in many years except as examples of a devoted life. It was said that, wanting to become missionaries somewhere and trusting in Providence to decide where they should go, they had after prayer shut their eyes and stuck a pin in a map of Asia. The pin-point had been Lachung. Certainly Lachung was a place of religion. On arrival we were greeted by monks and nuns. The nunnery provided not only for nuns but also for women who, being perhaps a little tired of their husbands, entered its precincts for as little as a week-end.

In days when travel was difficult and materials and labour cost very little, Claude White and Bell had built rest-houses every ten or twelve miles along the principal routes. Officials were thus able to tour widely without troubling the villagers with demands for large quantities of transport. The rest-houses were also a con-



## SIKKIM

venience to visitors who increased greatly in numbers during the war of 1939-45.

Other routes led from Gangtok to the Tibet frontier at the Nathu La, the Steep Pass, and from Kalimpong or Rungpo to the Tibet frontier at the Jelap La, the Beautiful Flat Pass, and to other parts of Sikkim. Each route had its own character and its own attractions. The main roads were paid for by the Government of India.

Faqir Chand Jali, who was from the Punjab, was the finest engineer of a Himalayan road I ever met. He resisted all temptation to show off and, without very much money, by doing here a little and there a little, he succeeded in the course of years in producing roads so intimate with the country through which they ran that only an expert was likely to notice the difficulties with which he had had to contend. He aligned a road from Gangtok at 6,000 feet to the Tibet border, twenty-seven miles away at 14,000 feet, without ever rising more than 350 feet in a mile.

Special difficulties were falls of cliff, landslides and erosion in a district where the hillsides for the most part were rotten and the rainfall very heavy; the dislike which mules straight from Tibet, and draught bullocks, had for motor traffic; and lack of camping grounds and of grazing. Jali and Bim Bahadur, the Forest Officer, solved these problems by sloping off the outer flanks of roads and of tracks between villages, so that the outward slope of the road and berm towards the valley was not less steep than the downward slope, and by planting up both the hillsides and the berms with suitable grasses. After several years of experiment it was decided that the most useful grass of all was Kikuyu grass (*penisetum clandestinum*). Animals thrive on it and being deep-rooted it stood up well to constant grazing and to dry periods.

No Viceroy had ever set foot in Sikkim, but in 1938 Lord and Lady Linlithgow decided to visit the Maharaja. A Viceroy spent a great part of every year on tour and, wherever he went, a considerable staff had to go with him. Each State he visited would seek to do him honour as it thought best. Wherever he went in his train the railway line would be guarded by men in sight of each other by day, or of each other's torches by night. Wherever he slept, there must be round him a triple line of precaution. The need of such measures was shown, after the British had handed



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

over power in India, by the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and of Liaquat Ali Khan. But we realized that Lord and Lady Linlithgow would want, as far as possible, to see Sikkim in its natural simplicity and we kept the arrangements as informal as we could. They stayed at the Residency, while Aubrey Metcalfe, the Foreign Secretary, and Gilbert Laithwaite the Private Secretary to the Viceroy, and the rest stayed either at the Residency or in the travellers' bungalows near it. The one essential preparation, which was not forgotten, was to lengthen beds to suit the stature of Their Excellencies.

The visit was welcome as an indication of the increased interest which the Government of India were taking in the North-East Frontier. But the visit did more than that. I was trying gradually to widen the horizon of the Maharaja and his family and to lessen their shyness of the outer world. Finding the Viceroy and Lady Linlithgow and their staff natural, interested and easy of approach, they realized that they need be shy of nobody. It was with joy that three years later they learned that Lady Linlithgow wished to spend several weeks in Sikkim and Bhutan. Later, Lord and Lady Wavell in their turn continued the good work.

In Sikkim we were a family and we came to think of many parts of the world as places where friends of the family lived. From the United States came, amongst others, John Gunther who had in hand his 'Inside Asia', and Ilia Tolstoy and Brooke Dolan bearing greetings and gifts from President Roosevelt to the Dalai Lama. In Calcutta we came to know Irene Vincent whose little girl was a fellow-patient at the Tropical School. From an American Air Force camp in Assam, where we were made greatly welcome, some of us had a wonderful week flying high and low over Sikkim and Bhutan and remote tribal areas east of Bhutan. (Just when the Japanese were at the peak of their invasion of Assam, a great flood down the Manas river destroyed some miles of the only railway to Assam. We were told to find out how this had happened. In sparkling weather we flew level with a hundred Himalayan snow peaks, faced full towards the sun.)

Ella Maillart meant to us Switzerland, and Ernst Schäfer, the naturalist and explorer, Germany. Chinese Missions passed on their way to and from Lhasa. We were touched when the leader of one of them backed up his suggestion of a matrimonial alliance



## SIKKIM

with the assurance that the bride would bring her own coffin. Tibetan boys and girls dropped in on their way to and from school in India. Links with the head-hunting Naga tribe of the Assam frontier were Philip Mills and Ursula Graham-Bower. She had recruited and led Nagas in the war, had been initiated as a member of the tribe and was to learn, after her marriage, that, if she wanted her fellow-tribesmen to regard her as an honest woman, she must go through another marriage ceremony according to Naga rites. From Calcutta and Delhi and from other parts of India many came to visit us, and many in their turn welcomed us to their homes.

For a sparkling account of Sikkim as viewed by fresh, young eyes, see Audrey Harris's 'Eastern Visas'.

In the summer of 1939 Dick and Bob, who were at Winchester, came out by air for the summer holidays. We visited western Bhutan where in Raja Dorji's eldest son Jigme they found a public school boy just like themselves. We were at Phari in Tibet on the way back when news was received of the outbreak of war. In the autumn Arthur Parsons, who was acting as Governor at Peshawar, found a place for Dick as an additional and unofficial A.D.C. and there seemed to be some prospect that he might soon be taken on in the Indian Army, possibly in the Guides. But at that stage of the war the Army authorities in India were sticky about any sort of departure from the ordinary routine. Bob was in any case too young for the Army. There was time to be filled in before he could obtain a passage by air, so he went off to Kalimpong as the guest of Dr. Graham and his daughter, Betty, to learn typing and shorthand. His instructor was to be a nun at the Convent School and we wondered how she would cope with him. We need not have worried. She had, before she took the veil, been the head of an office in the Philippines with many tough American men under her.

In the first rank of Schools in India were, for boys, Bishop Cotton School, Simla, and St. Joseph's School, Darjeeling, and, for girls, the Convent at Kalimpong. Although most of the pupils were of European stock, the school authorities found that boys and girls from Sikkim and Bhutan and Tibet fitted in well. At Bishop Cotton the eldest sons of the Maharaja of Sikkim and of Raja Dorji displayed not only great skill at games but also leadership, Jigme Dorji being one of the small and very select number of the 'Spartans'. This was a society for which a boy could be pro-



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

posed only once and to which he could not be elected if there was even one dissentient vote. Boys and girls who came from Tibet, even though they started at a late age, usually made up ground quickly. At the age of fifteen Pema Choden, the second daughter of the Maharaja of Sikkim, whom we knew better by her school nickname of Kula, passed the Senior Cambridge examination with credits in all subjects but one and seven distinctions. When I congratulated the Reverend Mother on this, she said that on the contrary she was somewhat disappointed. She went on to say that no other girl had done nearly as well, but that she simply did not judge Kula and other girls of Tibetan stock by normal standards. Kula was one of those enviable people who can read a page of poetry through two or three times and have it by heart.

But these children were gay also and, like all who have the Tibetan outlook, they saw nothing wrong in mixing up fun with religion. I remember a hot afternoon when, bumping along a dusty track on the Bhutan border in a motor lorry, we passed the time singing *Ten Green Bottles*, a hymn, the *Grand Old Duke of York*, and a carol or two. Their parents took the view that, if they went to chapel services at school, they would be all the better Buddhists.

The War in its early stages did not affect Sikkim very much. It seemed, from what I heard, that throughout India recruitment was even better managed in the second World War than in the first. Actually a large part of the population of Sikkim was considered unworthy to be put on the official list of 'martial races' eligible for recruitment. Even so the Sikkim contribution was, in proportion to population, well above the average for India, and a particularly fine V.C. was won by a Sikkimese of Tibetan stock who, not being a member of a 'martial race', had enlisted under a false name. Severely wounded, he knocked out three Japanese machine guns.

Early in the summer of 1942 at Gangtok I was present at the wedding ceremony of the Maharaja's eldest daughter. I forget whether it was on account of some matter of punctilio or of his official duties that the bridegroom, a tall very good-looking young man, the son of a member of the Tibetan Cabinet, was unable to be present. The wedding was therefore by proxy. But, if one had not been told of this, the fact would never have been guessed. As



the real bridegroom would have done, the proxy had arrived from Lhasa with a full retinue and with a full scale of gifts for the bride—corals, turquoises, gold and silver ornaments, silks and rolls of Tibetan cloth.

Inside the palace temple the Maharaja sat cross-legged on a dais under a silk-embroidered canopy supported by columns in the form of gilded writhing dragons. Lamas and monks boomed chants, recited prayers and read passages of the Buddhist scriptures. Drums, trumpets, cymbals and flageolets joined in. Buttered and salted tea in jade cups set on fretted gold stands and symbolical foods were served. All present advanced in turn to offer white silk scarves to the Maharaja and to the proxy bridegroom and the bride. Rice was scattered in token of good luck. Then the bride and bridegroom took leave of the Maharaja. The proxy bridegroom on a richly caparisoned pony and the bride in a gay litter circled the temple in an auspicious direction and set off up the road towards the Nathu La and Tibet.

Paljor, the Maharaja's eldest son, had spent some time at a training camp for Indian Civil Service probationers which was being run at Dehra Dun by Jumbo Pinnell. But he insisted on applying for admission to the Indian Air Force. Possibly he was the only man in his position in India who joined the Indian Air Force as an ordinary combatant officer. I went with him to the Air Force School at Lahore where he was to be trained. He had recently been given his Wings when, on landing on the aerodrome at Peshawar, his machine caught fire and he was killed. The Maharaja and his family and all in Sikkim took their loss exactly as families and friends in England were taking their losses. They were proud of their Maharaj Kumar. The Air Force did him honour and sent the body to Sikkim with an escort. The Viceroy and the Governor of Bengal and many others sent wreaths. At the Palace temple the service of honour and of farewell to the dead was, so far as I could see, very little different from the ceremonies which had been performed at the marriage of the Maharaj Kumari. There was no sign of mourning. The blaze of coloured silks was as before. As before, the body on its bier was carried right-handed round the temple towards the road which leads to Tibet. All who had known Paljor and played games with him crowded to present a silk scarf and to touch the bier and to take a share in carrying it. A mile up



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

the road the procession turned left into the forest and up a steep track to the place where the bodies of members of the ruling house of Sikkim are burned.

At Gangtok for many years 'Aunt Mary'—less well known by the name of The Honourable Mary Scott, D.D.—had given herself and her means to establishing a school for girls. She had worked in what some of us considered to be 'insubordinate co-operation' with the Church of Scotland Mission at Kalimpong. In a house overlooking the Gangtok market place, from small beginnings she had created a school of some two hundred girls, many of whom were boarders. She had had the strength of mind, at a time when the school was developing year by year, to hand over her work to a successor in the young prime of life. This was Ruth Fairservice, whose husband Gavin was the head of the Sikkim branch of the Mission. The Maharaja and his people wished that there should be a memorial to Paljor. There was already a school for six hundred boys, under Cecil Dudley, a Cambridge man, in what had been the barracks of the half battalion of Infantry formerly quartered at Gangtok. It was generally agreed that a new and larger school for girls was what Paljor, who had loved children and been loved by them, would have liked. A fine site was carved out of the hillside a little below Gangtok and in two years Jali had built a classroom block for three hundred girls. It seemed natural enough in Sikkim, where people served God in different ways and were content that God should so be served, that the foundation stone of the school should be blessed in succession according to Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Mahomedan rites. For the infants a large room, which serves also as an assembly room for the whole school and as a theatre, was presented by the State Banker, Rai Bahadur Sukhani. He is also a mica king. This room is interesting on account of the large number of local timbers, all named, which were used in its construction. A fine lead was given when the Maharaja's second daughter, Pema Choden, volunteered to teach in the school.

Near the boys' and girls' schools were also a carpentry school which turned out all the furniture needed for State and Government buildings—Jali took a great interest in it—and an experimental grass farm, under Bim Bahadur, the Forest Manager. It was a popular resort on market days and from it Kikuyu, Lemon,



## SIKKIM

Guinea and Napier grass were soon spread throughout the State to the great benefit of the cattle. Between the girls' school and the Mission church a football ground, with room for a quarter-mile running-track, had been made in the hillside and beyond it was a swimming-bath. Many kinds of climbing roses hung down the forty-foot cliff which had been formed when the football ground was made. On this side and that grew masses of arum lilies, agapanthus and intensely blue hydrangeas. Below in the valley a Pelton wheel installation supplied electric light. The bazaar, which was off the road, was perhaps the cleanest in India. Piped water came in from virgin forest.

More might have been done if the State had been richer. A difficulty about introducing a system of taxing the smaller cultivators direct, as in the Punjab and in many parts of India, was that this would have involved a detailed survey and record of rights, which, amongst the steep hillsides of Sikkim, would have cost the State more than it could afford. Nevertheless, the State paid its way and, so far from having anything in the nature of a national debt, held a moderate amount of Indian Government securities.

In spite of the revenue demand not being at all excessive, there came a time soon after the beginning of the War when a number of landlords in the State had fallen heavily into arrears with their payment of land revenue. The Maharaja asked for advice and help. The obvious course seemed to be to get in a land revenue expert. The Maharaja was willing to pay whatever might be necessary, but it was war time and we could not find a suitable man. In the end, R. B. Densapa, Private Secretary to the Maharaja and a member of the State Council, said he would do his best, if I would help him. We found that some of the chief debtors tended to lose heart when, even after they had made an effort, all that they had to show for it was that, instead of being say four years in arrears, they were now three years in arrears. So we decided that whatever a landlord paid should be applied first to his revenue account for the current year and then, if there was anything over, to reducing the amount due on account of the last previous year. For some reason or other this worked like magic. A few hopeless cases were granted special treatment, but most of the landlords who had been in arrears took fresh heart. Soon it became a matter of pride, as it



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

often was in Punjab villages, to pay every penny that was due by the proper date.

As the War years passed, the unpredictable date when India would become an independent country was obviously drawing near. It would have been idle to expect the Maharaja of Sikkim and his Counsellors to study how a small and remote State might take its place in the fabric of a new India, or to attempt to master the intricacies of the reports of the Simon and other Commissions. Sikkim was not thrilled at the proposal that it might have one representative amongst the several hundred members of a Central Assembly, or that in a Council of State it might share a Member with two other Indian States of which it knew nothing and with which it had nothing in common. But it was clear that, the more the State improved its administration and bettered the lot of its subjects, and the more the leading personalities of the State lost their shyness of the outer world and of the Government of India, the better would the State be able to adjust itself to changes when they came. Curiously it is Sikkim, more than any other State in India, that, since India became independent in 1947, appears to have maintained and even to have enhanced the status which it enjoyed under treaty with the British.



## XIII

### *Bhutan*

1935-45

FOR six hundred miles the southern border of Tibet runs eastwards from Sikkim and then north-eastwards along the main crests of the eastern Himalayan range. A hundred miles to the south of this range lie the plains of the Brahmaputra valley. This region, which is larger than Scotland and Wales, is crossed by great rivers which come down from the high lands of Tibet. These are the Amo Chu, or Torsa, on the west; next the Manas; then the Subansiri; then the Dihang, which is the same river as the Tsang Po of Central Tibet; and, on the east, the Lohit. They all flow into the Brahmaputra.

When in summer the southerly winds of the monsoon sweep from the Bay of Bengal into the Brahmaputra Valley, they strike the high hills of this region. As the air rises, it cools and there are torrents of rain, especially on the southern faces of the outer ranges of hills. Falls of two to three hundred inches a year, mostly within the space of a few weeks, are not uncommon. Farther to the north, and on the northern faces of the hills, the rainfall is less heavy until, in the Tibetan plains between the main eastern Himalayan range and the Tsang Po, it is only a few inches a year.

In their natural state, the foothills bordering the Brahmaputra plain and the ranges to the north of them up to about eight thousand feet are clothed in impenetrable jungle and forests. They are the home of rhinoceros and tiger and elephant and are infested with leeches, biting flies deservedly called *dim-dam*, and a deadly type of malaria. Apart from recent Nepalese immigration into the foothills of Bhutan, most of the inhabitants live above the eight-thousand-foot line. Of much of the eastern part of the region little is known even now. From what I have read and been told and have seen from the air, it appears to be a region of great natural fertility and of tremendous resources of water-power.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Bhutan—which its inhabitants and the Tibetans call Druk Yul, the Land of the Dragon—formerly extended vaguely over the western third of this region. For the most part it was in the hands of a loose confederacy of hill chieftains who seldom came down from the uplands except to raid. After a raid on the State of Cooch Bihar in 1865 Mr. Ashley Eden was sent, without sufficient preparation or escort, to negotiate with the Bhutanese. He was made a prisoner and troops were sent up from India. By the peace which followed the five hundred square miles which became the Kalimpong sub-division of the Darjeeling District, and large tracts of malarious land along the skirt of the hills facing the plains of Bengal and of Assam, along with the Diwangiri area farther to the east, where a battle had been fought, were taken from the Bhutanese. These skirt lands, called the Dooars or Gateways (of Bhutan), are now famous for their tea-gardens.

Gradually the Penlop (chieftain) of Tongsa had established himself as the effective ruler of Bhutan and had been recognized as Maharaja by the Government of India, to whom he conceded control of the foreign relations of Bhutan.

In 1914 I had visited the then Maharaja at Diwangiri. Now, in the early summer of 1938, at the suggestion of his chief Agent, Raja Dorji, I set out to visit his successor at his summer capital, Bumthang. I had left hospital at the Tropical School in Calcutta only a few days before but I was in good hands. The Maharaja of Sikkim insisted on providing a litter and bearers who carried me in great comfort eight thousand feet uphill from Gangtok to the Tibetan border at the Nathu La, and down five thousand feet to where the route to Bhutan crosses the Chumbi valley. Here Bhutanese carriers took on the task and carried me uphill and downhill to Ha, Raja Dorji's headquarters at Jongpen, or Governor, of the most western District of Bhutan. He was also Deb Zimpon, or Chief Minister, to the Maharaja. Spending the greater part of the year at his home in Kalimpong, he was the Maharaja's chief link with the outer world and with the Government of India.

From the Nathu La the main route into and across Bhutan ran, like a series of splayed-out capital W's, down and up, down and up, across great valleys and ridges. At almost every halting place there was the din of a rushing river fed by Himalayan snows. I



## BHUTAN

know no other country so fine, so fertile and so unspoiled; nor a population so strong and so joyous. In James Hilton's 'Lost Horizon', the opening scene may perhaps have been suggested by the evacuation of the Legations from Kabul. Bhutan would have been a fitting region in which he might have set his Shangri La. Tibet is remote; and the civilization of Bhutan had come to it from Tibet across the great mountain range of the Himalayas.

No anthropologist has worked in Bhutan, but it is probable that its people are for the most part of eastern Tibetan origin. By religion and language they are akin to the Tibetans. But both physically and mentally they, and the people of the Chumbi Valley who are related to them, are readily distinguishable from their neighbours; and it is tempting to think of them as being a natural product of the region in which they live. More than any other country that I know, and certainly more than Kashmir, Bhutan makes me think of the Swiss countryside as it may have been some hundreds of years ago. But it is a countryside without a single town; and if there is a shop in the whole of Bhutan I have not seen it. Away from the bold rain-soaked hills clothed with deciduous forest, which overlook the plains of Bengal and Assam, the country becomes less steep, the rainfall is moderate and the natural vegetation is chiefly pine and fir of many kinds. These in turn give place to rhododendron and to maples, which in late autumn set the valleys and hillsides aflame with tongues of red, russet and gold. Above the tree-line are rocky slopes where sheep and yaks graze in summer. Above all towers a mighty range of snow mountains. A hundred peaks await the first challenge of man.

The Bhutanese seemed to me to live on close and friendly terms with their surroundings. With abundance of easily-worked timber near at hand, they were amply housed. The roofs were covered with long shingles held in place with stones, and the walls were of timber or of rammed earth. The ground floor would often be given over to cattle, ponies, pigs and chickens, and the open-sided top floor to the storage of grain, hay and straw. Space for cultivation and for grazing was easily won by burning down forest. Bhutan is at the western end of the area, extending to Yunnan in China, from which George Forrest, Kingdon-Ward, Ludlow and the Sheriffs, have introduced many of the greatest



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

treasures of the gardens of the western world. Here Nature gives and gives abundantly.

Having as their most formidable neighbours the Tibetans, who for many centuries had regarded war as sinful, and isolated by mountains and dense forests from other nations, the Bhutanese had developed a self-sufficient mode of life. From Tibet they imported tea and salt, trading in return rice, paper made of the local daphne shrub, and forest products, especially dyes. From India they imported, increasingly in recent years, bars of iron from which they made tips for their wooden ploughshares and adzes which they preferred to saws for shaping timber, some cotton goods, and bars of silver and of copper. To India they sent lac, beeswax, wool, skins and ivory, ponies and cattle. Such goods passed hands for the most part at seasonal markets a few miles beyond the borders of Bhutan. But essentially Bhutan was self-sufficing. Like other highlanders, the Bhutanese wore a combined plaid and kilt, gathered in at the waist, woven in intricate patterns in their own homes. Tucked inside this garment, above the belt, every Bhutanese man and woman carried a home-made and home-lacquered wooden bowl, usually of chestnut or of beech. This served both as a plate for food and as a cup for tea or for home-brewed beer and spirit. When their hair became inconveniently long, every man and woman from the Maharaja and his family downwards had it clipped close to the skull and then let it grow again. They had their own traditions of song and dance. Within living memory, when one local ruler went to war with another, the fighting had been done with swords and bows and arrows.

An indication of their physical strength was a habit villagers had, when trading rice to Phari in Tibet, of saving themselves the trouble of a second double journey by carrying, up to 16,000 feet above sea-level, loads of 160 instead of 80 lb. On the march Bhutanese porters, men and women, never seemed to tire.

But, unlike the Nepalese, the Bhutanese appeared to be increasing in numbers little if at all. The frequent occurrence of goitre perhaps indicated that in some of the valleys there was too much in-breeding or may have been due to lack of iodine; and there were other illnesses which needed investigation and cure. The



## BHUTAN

local laws and customs in regard to the possession of land and the inheritance of property may need to be revised, if the Bhutanese are to develop to the full. There is ample room for a great increase in population.

But Bhutan deserves a book to itself and it is not difficult to think of a trio who could write a fine book and illustrate it with pictures of the first order. The pictures by themselves, with a short text, would be of value. There can be few regions and peoples at once so picturesque and so little affected by modern influences; but changes may come soon and memories of the Bhutan of only yesterday may be obscured and forgotten.

Although I was in Bhutan several times, my clearest recollections are of the summer of 1938 when I visited the Maharaja at his summer capital, Bumthang. From Ha two days' march took us to Paro, the home of the Paro Penlop, a close relative of the Maharaja. The Maharaja had sent to meet me a mule, decked with a saddle-cloth of Chinese silk brocade—a fine walker with a more silky action than any other animal I ever rode—and a band. There were pipes and trumpets and drums; and before the band went the two most skilled dancers of the court. Bare-footed and with their robes of home-woven patterned silk of many colours kilted at the waist, they twisted and swayed their way along the path which led down the hillside. Big men, they moved on the lightest of feet. By the wayside children tended small fires of fragrant twigs. Auspicious clouds of scented smoke drifted across the path. Rounding a corner we were greeted by members of the Maharaja's household. Standing in a line they bowed and let the ends of broad silk scarves fall towards the ground. After Tibetan tea had been served from a great silver vessel chased with gold, we continued on our way.

My favourite character in Maurice Hewlett's novels is the eccentric flower-loving Senhouse. Making England his garden and travelling in his one-horse caravan, he would so plan his wanderings as to reach some loved spot at the time when some particular flower should be at its best. A single day's march in Bhutan would pass through several zones of vegetation. Between year and year, especially in spring and early summer, there might be variations of season and I had the excitement of wondering whether I should arrive at a place of remembered glories too early



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

or too late, or in the nick of time. In grace nothing excelled the blue, white and yellow meconopses of the higher slopes, the swaying branches of rhododendron cinnabarinum with its infinite variety of pastel shades, the bee-loved generous red-flowered rosa macrophylla, or the giant maidenhair-leaved pink-flowered thalictrum of moister sites. These had a wide habitat, but some plants were choosy. There was a five-petalled, sweet-scented, pale cream rose which I noticed only near the entrance to the Jong at Paro; and a yellow rhododendron which I sighted only once, on a steep northern cliff face. Once I came on a mile of tiger lilies such as I never saw again. George Sherriff had a story of an alp where primulas interbred so freely that the place was given the name of the Immoral Corner.

The Paro Penlop, short, merry and stout, reminded me of a friend who, on attaining to the dignity of knighthood, thought of asking to be dubbed Sir Cumference. The Paro delighted in archery and in shooting at a target with a small-bore rifle. He was not put off by the facts that he did not find it easy when he drew the bow to keep the arrow clear of his body, or to find a point of balance when he lay down on the ground to take aim. For archery the Bhutanese normally used a target some five feet high and a foot broad, with coloured circles near the top. The range would be about 130 yards. On an occasion of ceremony, before the shooting began, the opposing sides would charge towards each other and perform a war dance, probably a relic of the actual battle manœuvres of a generation or two ago. Having fired his arrow, the archer would speed after it and poise himself this way and that, as if to direct the arrow in its flight. To encourage the archers gaily dressed girls danced and sang round a great cauldron of barley beer. The target was often hit.

As a patron of dancing the Paro excelled. The scene was the open, stone-flagged courtyard of the Jong—part palace, part monastery and part fort. As in Tibet and in Sikkim, all comers were welcome. Half-way along one side of the courtyard was a group of forty boys, aged five to twelve, dressed in the homespun woollen maroon robes of monks. Some of the dances, which went on all day, were performed by the monks of the Jong monastery and some by the Penlop's troops. Dancing was held to be a soldierly and even knightly exercise. The dancers in their costly robes



## BHUTAN

wore masks of gods, devils, beasts and birds. Every mask and movement and tune, and even the intrusion of professional fools from time to time, was traditional and had its symbolical meaning. To a visitor who lacked the inner knowledge the scene might be only a spectacle. As a spectacle it was all the more convincing because of its naturalness. Probably the dances had not been rehearsed since the last public performance. From their youth up the performers had been familiar with their parts. I was fortunate in the 'Kodachrome' ciné film record I made that day. As in a Charlie Chaplin film, the oftener I watch it, the more surprising is each movement when it appears on the screen.

As we were nearing Bumthang several days later, we saw a guard of honour drawn up on the right of the route. It had been drilled in the Gurkha tradition and I never saw a smarter Present Arms. The Tongsa Penlop—from now on I shall be referring to him by that title which, when I got to know him, seemed to me to suit him better than the Indian title of Maharaja which was also his—had had a spacious camp built of timber freshly cut in the forest near by. It was approached through an avenue of tall poles on which were set, not as pennants but parallel to the poles, long, narrow strips of silk of many colours. However light the breeze, they were always a-flutter. I called on the Tongsa and he came to return my call. I can still see the sway of his retinue of big men as they surged up between the lines of flagged poles. He made light of the lavish preparations and apologized for having to ask his guests to make do with such a mean camp. The supplies of food and drink provided for the whole of my party throughout my stay were lavish. I remember especially the milk. The Tongsa had a herd of black cattle cross-bred with wild *mithan*, sleek and well tended.

The Tongsa was a man of middle age and middle height, thick-set, firm-lipped and broad of brow. His face seldom lacked the flicker of a smile. He had two charming consorts, who were sisters. His son, who has since succeeded him, was a bright impish boy of twelve. I saw much of the whole family at picnics, and at ciné shows of which they could never have enough. The pictures opened to them new worlds. Before, Lhasa had been to them a Holy City, imagined but never realized. When later I met the Tongsa on the Assam border and had with me films of ceremonies



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

connected with the installation of the Dalai Lama, news of the films spread and every day for a week the hut in which they were shown had to be lengthened.

As at Paro, there were sports, and archery and dancing. The acknowledged expert amongst those who played and danced and sang was a tall man, pink-faced and with deep pouches under his eyes, reputed to have reached the age of ninety years. Dressed in what might have been the festal costume of a Greek islander, a long beribboned guitar in his hand, he held audiences in his spell. He seemed to be moved by his own music and the spontaneous actions of his feet. Behind him were the long fluttering flags and across the broad valley the line of a timber-clad range of hills. Patches from which trees had recently been cleared gleamed red with the fruit of wild strawberries.

It was the time of the breaking of the monsoon. Wheat and barley were on the point of ripening. The ears were stripped from the straw between pairs of narrow canes, to be dried off under the open eaves of houses. Then cattle were let in, fifty in a field of an eighth of an acre, and within two days the field had been ploughed and an autumn crop of buckwheat had been sown. Screened from the main force of the monsoon by a succession of hill ranges, the district at that season had the climate of an English summer.

The Bhutanese have artistic sense and skill. Their clothing, woven in raised patterns, stands all weathers and lasts for a generation. The bright colours prepared from local rocks and jungle products never clash. They are expert at making household vessels of metal and of wood. But, new lamps for old. They were beginning to doubt whether the products of their own hereditary skills deserved to be compared with the mass-produced articles which entered Bhutan from India.

Religion seemed to sit on the Bhutanese more lightly than on the majority of such Tibetans as I knew. Perhaps it was because they lived in a country where nature was more generous and more kind. The recruitment of Bhutanese during the War was begun too late for definite evidence to be obtained of their value as soldiers.

Farewells were made in Bhutanese fashion. The Tongsa came with us for some miles, there was an exchange of gay silk scarves



## BHUTAN

and, as the distance between us increased, loud farewell cries became faint and yet more faint, until they could only be imagined from the flicker of silk scarves which still caught the eye when ear-shot had been out-distanced.



## XIV

### *Ploys*

1935-45

IN the appointments which I had held from time to time in Simla, Calcutta and Delhi, I had never felt that I was really in my element, but often, and especially now during my last ten years of service, I found reason to be glad that I knew something of the ways of the Government of India. In dealing with reasonable and very busy men, of greater mental capacity than oneself, it paid not to be boring. This meant at the outset the clearing up of all matters, large or small, which had been pending too long. I found it a good plan to send to Government a list of all outstanding cases and to say that I proposed to come to Delhi or Simla in a few weeks' time, prepared to discuss them if necessary. Headquarters officials are apt not to enjoy wasting their time on the discussion of small matters (which may involve more than one Department) and usually, before I reached headquarters, the pending list had been thinned.

I had learned also that, somewhere in the Government of India, there was usually somebody—it might be the Viceroy or a Secretary to Government, or it might be a clerk—whose opinion was likely to be decisive in a particular matter. Whoever he might be, he was most likely to be helpful if he was interested in the peoples with whom I had to deal. In this connection 'Kodachrome' ciné films of Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet were of value.

Officers at the headquarters of Government become suspicious of a man whose reports, while they may be reasonably readable for the most part, are apt to end up with a request for money. Here I was doubly lucky. By taking over from the postal authorities the carriage of mails between India and Phari I was able to save enough money to meet the cost of the political Mission at Lhasa; and Sir Jeremy Raisman, the Finance Member of the



## PLOYS

Governor-General's Council, and Narahari Rao, his representative in the Foreign Department, agreed to allow me to operate on the basis of a contract budget. This meant that what was not spent one year was available for the following year, or the year after that. Actually it saved Government money and me much trouble. And I was able to keep my reports untainted by ideas of filthy lucre.

The men, high and low, who exercise financial control are seldom popular. But I doubt whether anything that was done in India during my time did more to give the new India and Pakistan a good start than the fine and understanding system of financial control which was already in existence when they became independent nations.

Much also was apt to depend in one's relations with the Government of India on personal reputation. Bell has put it on record that in his dealings with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama he did not recall that His Holiness ever refused him anything that he asked for; but that, on the other hand, he did not recall that he had ever asked for anything that His Holiness might not reasonably grant. In the same way, if recommendations to Government were restricted to what was reasonable and were fought for until they were granted (there are few more convincing characters than the *Importunate Widow of Scripture*), each point gained made it easier to win the next one.

Especially at headquarters at Gangtok it was possible to deal with the bulk of a day's correspondence by writing short notes on papers before they were sent down to the office. Thus, by one means or another, I came to enjoy an increasing amount of leisure. For a man who might be a Jack of all Trades but was certainly master of none, how could leisure best be occupied in a field where there was room for a hundred experts to work, each on his own subject, for a hundred years? How also could I be in frequent and close contact with people who mattered in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet without being intrusive? Actually I drifted into developing four main interests.

So far I have written entirely from memory, checked by reference to friends and to books and the files of newspapers. (How wonderfully prompt and helpful the staff of the British Museum are!) If there have been mistakes of fact, I must ask to be forgiven.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

For the rest of this chapter and for chapter xvi I have full contemporary records.

I had seen something of the methods of trout-breeding in Kashmir, and both in the Kurram and in the Malakand I had tried to carry on the work of predecessors who had established trout hatcheries. About 1925 Eric Bailey, then Political Officer in Sikkim, and an Association in the Darjeeling District had tried to establish brown trout by means of ova brought from Kashmir. In Sikkim the trout had apparently died out entirely and little headway was being made in Darjeeling. In 1938 the Maharaja of Sikkim and I arranged with the Darjeeling Fishing Association to share the cost of obtaining 20,000 brown trout ova from Kashmir and of hatching them out near Darjeeling, at 7,000 feet above sea level. Although the hatch was fair, survival was bad. But we learned some useful lessons. What was even more important, Raja Dorji became interested in the prospect of introducing trout into Bhutan and set to work on making a series of small narrow ponds at his home at Ha.

For the 1940 season the Kashmir State very kindly agreed to replace the 20,000 ova free of charge. The ova left the Kashmir State hatcheries on January 20th, 1940, and arrived at the Darjeeling hatchery five days later. They were said to have been taken from six-year-old fish. Next day about 4,000 ova which had gone white were removed. The rest were a good grey colour and began to hatch out in a few days. On February 18th the estimate was 12,000 alevins, 800 ova still unhatched and about 12,000 ova failed. Actually many more than the 20,000 ova promised had been sent. It was noticed that the ova from the lower trays hatched out earlier than, but not so well as, those from the higher trays. Water from the melting ice in the travelling box may not have reached the bottom trays properly. Survival was again poor, with the result that in June, 1942, the half share to which Sikkim and Bhutan were entitled amounted to only 1,100 fry.

The journey from Darjeeling to Gangtok was sixty miles of slow motoring across and up the hot Teesta valley. The fry were moved in several batches, the first batch being sent partly in special galvanized tins of approved pattern and partly in the porous



## PLOYS

round earthenware jars which in India are called chattis. The journey took about eight hours, the water being changed frequently and with due care on the way. Practically all the fry in the galvanized tins died on the way or arrived in a weak state and died afterwards. Those in the chattis travelled well. No use was therefore made of the galvanized tins for the later consignments.

Four hundred fry for Bhutan, of about 2-inch size, were sent from Darjeeling to Gangtok in four batches during June and July, 1940, and were at once sent on, in chattis carried by porters, on their further journey of seventy miles to Ha. This journey, which involved the crossing of three passes of more than 14,000 feet, took on the average four and a half days. The total losses between Darjeeling and Ha amounted to 105. The 295 survivors were placed in the oblong ponds Raja Dorji had made. These ponds were fed by a side stream from the Ha river which contained many small local fish and plenty of shrimps and snails. The fry were given finely minced liver, and meat later on. They did well, survivals a year later being 116. Most of them were gradually released, first into a large side stream in which there were many small local fish and a lot of long green weed, and later into the main stream of the Ha river. Of those that remained under semi-captive conditions eight were netted in September, 1942, when they were about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years old, and were found to weigh 2,  $2\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $2\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $2\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  and  $5\frac{1}{2}$  pounds. Perhaps a few feeds of minced bear and tiger flesh they had been given in the summer of 1941 had done them good. Larger trout had been seen in the river.

The moral of the 1940 experiment seemed to be that, if we could get ova safely to Ha and hatch them out and look after the alevins there, we might make real progress. So Raja Dorji sent two intelligent Bhutanese to Kashmir to study methods at the Harwan hatchery near Srinagar and he and I went shares in 20,000 brown trout ova, of which we again received generous measure. The ova were brought from Kashmir in the middle of January, were sent straight on to Ha and hatched out well. The alevins, in addition to such natural food as they picked up, were fed on egg and at a later stage on egg and liver. Between May and September more than 4,000 fry of the 1942 hatch were distributed at various points on the Ha river and in two small lakes at about 13,000 feet between the Chumbi Valley and Ha. In the years which followed



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

fry were sent to other rivers in Bhutan. Many of these were of the character of super-salmon rivers. They came sliding down their valleys from their snow-fed sources, were unfordable for miles and were very seldom too dirty to be fishable. There were also a great number of tributaries of all sizes. I have a photograph taken in about 1944 of two trout, weight  $7\frac{1}{2}$  lb. and  $9\frac{1}{2}$  lb., length 22 and  $23\frac{1}{2}$  inches. In 1950 Frank Ludlow caught a fish of 11 lb. 6 oz. on a fly spoon and many of 3 to 5 lb.

The 1940 fry having for various reasons failed in Gangtok, fry were sent from Ha to Sikkim in September, 1942, and were later placed in the Bidang Tso, the Menmoi Tso and the Changu Lake, all of which are near the Tibetan border at heights between 11,000 and 13,000 feet. Recent news is that all of these lakes have yielded trout up to 4 lb., and one of  $6\frac{3}{4}$  lb. has been taken in Changu. Six fry of the 1940 batch barely survived a journey to Lingmathang, where there is a splendid stretch of deep smooth clear water, a reach of the Amo Chu which has come tumbling down 3,000 feet from the Phari plain. Below Yatung the Amo Chu—the Torsa of Bengal—receives from Bhutan a small tributary which has been stocked.

It is to be hoped that future travellers will report any news they may have as to how the trout are faring. It would be interesting to learn what are the cold-weather temperatures of the lower reaches of the Torsa and other north-bank tributaries of the Brahmaputra. There would seem to be a possibility that, if there is a season when the main stream of the Brahmaputra and of some of its tributaries does not exceed  $70^{\circ}$  F., the spread of brown trout in the eastern Himalayas may extend far.

For any success that may have been achieved, thanks are due not only to helpers in Sikkim and Bhutan, but particularly also to Sir Peter Clutterbuck, Chief Conservator of Forests, Kashmir, and Mr. Malhotra, Game Warden, Kashmir; to the eminent scientist Dr. S. L. Hora; to Frank Ludlow; and to Douglas Smyth-Osbourne and others of the Darjeeling Fishing Association who, year after year, persevered in their attempts to introduce trout into the eastern Himalayas.

Raja Dorji also gave great help, and interested himself keenly, in the collection of botanical specimens. Neither of us had the knowledge which would have been necessary if we had tried to





Primula Sherriffae







## PLOYS

work on the lines of experts such as Forrest and Kingdon-Ward, Ludlow and the Sherriffs, George Taylor or Bor. They could distinguish what was new to science, or rare, or unknown before in a certain region. They also knew, or could guess by some instinct, what flowers were likely to succeed in English gardens and could plan to collect at the proper season for despatch to England the roots and seeds of plants marked down when they were in flower. We did indeed collect some seeds, especially of primula, meconopsis and rhododendron, and sent them home to Kew, who made further distribution to the Royal Horticultural Society and to a number of nurserymen and private gardens. The rhododendron seed, collected by Bim Bahadur, the Forest Manager in Sikkim, was most successful. There is a bed of these rhododendrons at Kew Gardens; and on Battleston Hill at Wisley in 1946 they were growing like weeds. Unfortunately most of them were lost when the layout of Battleston Hill was altered.

But we concentrated mainly on collecting and drying eight or ten specimens of everything that was found growing at medium and high altitudes. Kew had let me know that this material was wanted for the Herbarium. They supplied presses and blotting paper and said that they would be content with a statement of the place and elevation at which each specimen had been collected and the date. The collections were posted home in batches. As they increased in number, I was astonished at the accuracy with which Raja Dorji's Bhutanese collectors and my Sikkim orderlies were able to say whether a particular plant had been collected already and when and where it had been found.

The authorities at Kew were people worth working for. At that time C. E. C. Fischer, formerly of the Indian Forest Service, was Assistant for India at Kew. He and his colleagues were more prompt than I had dared to expect in working out the collections and in referring to high authorities, such as Sir William Wright Smith of Edinburgh, when necessary. They also posted back to me in Sikkim many hundreds of mounted and named specimens with complete lists. Unluckily under wartime conditions several parcels of these specimens were lost in the post, but a complete set of the specimens is now in the Forest Research Institute at Dehra Dun. In all, from Bhutan and elsewhere, specimens of some two thousand different species reached Kew. Few of them were new to



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

science, but nearly all were from areas of which botanically little was then known, and they were therefore of value as extending the ranges of previously known plants; and actually near Phari, close to the main trade route, we collected three gentians which were found to be new. If I had made such a collection when I was first in Tibet in 1912-14, I could not have failed to find many plants which were then unknown. But the real reward lay in the collecting itself. It opened my eyes to the wealth of beauty that lay around and brought me into touch with the collectors. The one unpleasant thing about the business was the reek of yak-dung smoke in specimens which had been given a preliminary drying in herdsmen's tents high up on Himalayan slopes.

Meanwhile, as leisure and opportunity offered, the idea of making the Tibetan language more intelligible to myself and perhaps to others, and especially to beginners, had been taking shape.

As had been the case with Persian, I felt the need of a book of simple conversations on everyday subjects; and of gramophone records in order that from the start the pronunciation might be got correctly.

The main difficulties of the language seemed to lie not in its grammar and syntax, but in its vocabulary and spelling. There were in fact several vocabularies. In his 'Seven Years in Tibet' Heinrich Harrer describes how, having spent two years amongst Tibetans who lacked refinement of language, he caused merriment in Lhasa by calling a spade a spade; for in Central Tibet there is a language of dust-and-ashes deference when I speak to a person of refinement about myself and my own concerns and possessions; another of simple words when I talk with a peasant or a servant; a third of politeness when I refer to an equal or superior and all that is his; and yet another when I address a very exalted person such as the Dalai Lama or refer to him. The mixing of nouns, verbs, adjectives etc. appropriate to one level with words appropriate to another level produces much the same effect as wearing a cloth cap with a dinner jacket, shorts and spurs. There was also the problem of why identical or almost identical sounds were spelt in widely different ways.

With Hugh Richardson as co-author and the willing help of



many, what had seemed to me to be chaos gradually took shape. Words became friends. Place names revealed their meaning and I found it easier than before to remember that, while my father and mother are my *Pa* and *Ma*, I must refer to yours as *Yap* and *Yum*. Likewise that, while what I sit upon is my *kup*, that portion of your anatomy is Your Honour's *shamphong*. And so also with my or your coming and going, being born, killing and dying, weariness, sleep, my house or your house, and my or your horse, dog or mule.

In spite of such refinements of language, it was found on analysis that actually all except a very small percentage of the words which are commonly used in Lhasa even by people of refinement are combinations of some two thousand syllables, most of which, under the elaborate Tibetan system of spelling, are differently spelt. Their elemental meaning does not vary. Thus *pu-no*, 'baby-vessel', means womb, and *nam-tru*, 'sky-boat', means aeroplane.

The result of several years' work, much of which was done in camp or in Lhasa, was the issue by the Oxford University Press in 1943 of 'Tibetan Word Book', 'Tibetan Syllables', and 'Tibetan Sentences'. In these great care was taken not to include any words or phrases which were not in common use. These books were followed by the private printing and issue of 'Tibetan Language Records, etc': which fitted in with language records (made in Lhasa and produced by the Gramophone Company), and dealt also with several other matters, and of 'Tibetan Verbs', and 'Tibetan Medical Terms'. Once the method of collecting material from the live mouths of men and women and of analysing words into syllables had been adopted and had been found to work, it was difficult to know where to stop.

Owing to the order of the letters in the Tibetan alphabet, the last syllable in the 'Word Book' happened to be *Om*, and the last phrase the mystic formula *Om mani padme hum*. 'O, the Jewel in the Lotus, hum.'

Reviews of the three published books were kindly, even 'Beachcomber' of the *Daily Express* professing interest in the syllable *hphrul* (meaning magic and actually pronounced *thru*), which he imagined to be the noise which a yak makes. For an appreciative foreword we were indebted to Sir Aurel Stein.

If any reader would care to have further details, I will gladly



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

supply them. The present position is that, during my last visit to Lhasa in 1944, experts went carefully through not only the 'Word Book', but also a supplement in manuscript of several thousand words which had been prepared by Rani Chuni Dorji and by Chang-lo Chen Kung, a fine scholar who had been in the close confidence of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.

The Chinese in Tibet are reported to have bought many copies of a reprint of part of 'Tibetan Sentences'. The 'Word Book' is out of print. Whether a second and enlarged edition of the 'Tibetan Word Book' will ever be printed is problematical.

But what meant most to the men and women and children with whom I was concerned were ventures into the fields of ciné photography and of recording of Tibetan music. Thinking that it might be a good means of keeping in touch with Dick and Bob, and before there was any idea of my returning to the Tibet frontier, when I was on leave in 1935 I went to Kodak in Kingsway, and asked whether they could provide a ciné camera for a man who knew nothing at all about ciné photography. At the price of about £14 they let me have a camera of a type which was becoming obsolete. The focus was fixed and I never used a colour filter or a telephoto lens or a stand. Tibetans are not fussy, but I had to take many scenes as best I could, without attracting attention, and a fool-proof camera was just what I needed. Some of the results are embodied in the film of Herr Harrer's 'Seven Years in Tibet'. Thank you, Messrs. Kodak.

It was only during my last visit to Lhasa that we got down to making gramophone records of Tibetan music and speech. Fox, our wireless man, Ringang and many other friends rose to the occasion.



## XV

### *Lhasa*

1936—37

TIBET, the roof of the world, a country of great mountains, plains and lakes, lies at an average height of some three miles above sea-level. Along the southern border of Tibet the Himalayan mountain chain stretches for 2,000 miles from Kashmir to Burma; to the east is China; and to the north are the Gobi Desert, Mongolia and Sinkiang. The political status and the political boundaries of Tibet have varied from time to time. There were epochs when the Tibetans were great warriors and the power of Tibet extended far beyond its present borders. But from the sixth century A.D. onwards Buddhist influences flowed in from Kashmir, Eastern India, Nepal and China and, coalescing with primitive forms of religion which were already at home in the country, became the dominant influence in Tibetan life. Gradually there was evolved a definite system of Lamaistic Buddhism and of divine Priest-Kings whose seat of authority is at Lhasa.

Lhasa is situated on the right bank of the Kyi Chu river 30 miles east of its confluence with the Tsangpo. The height is nearly 12,000 feet above sea-level but the climate is dry and the latitude is approximately the same as that of Delhi, Cairo and New Orleans. Very good crops are produced under irrigation. The city with its 40,000 inhabitants is of a size which is ideal for a corporate life. A few miles away lie the world's largest monasteries, Drepung and Sera, which are reputed to contain 7,700 and 5,500 monks, but often house more. The most important buildings are the Potala, which is the official residence of the Dalai Lama, and the much older Jokhang, or Great Temple, where the Kashag, or Cabinet (*ka* = order; *shag* = room), meets. A mile away to the south-west is the Norbhu Lingka (Jewel Garden), which is the country residence of the Dalai Lama.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

In Tibet the lay world is strongly aristocratic. But the normal practice is for one son of every family to become a monk and in a monastery any man may rise to the top. Many women are nuns. The government of the country consists of the Dalai Lama, or during his minority a Regent who is always a monk; a lay Prime Minister; a Cabinet of four, who are known as *Shap-pes* and of whom the senior member is always a monk; and a National Assembly in which the monasteries are strongly represented. Other important officers of State are the Lord Chamberlain, always a monk, who is the chief of the personal staff of the Dalai Lama; lay and monk secretaries; the Chief Oracle, who is a monk; and officers in charge of districts or of special departments, who may be monk or lay. Most of the Dalai Lamas have been the sons of poor parents, but the father of a Dalai Lama becomes a *kung*, or Duke, and is granted properties suitable to his rank. The monasteries are great landholders.

No foreigner ever loved Tibet and the Tibetans more than the Italian Jesuit, Ippolito Desideri. Writing early in the eighteenth century, he knew the country at the end of a long period during which it had been practically independent of Chinese rule. Even so the picture which he paints does not clash with what has been described by Younghusband, who was at the head of the armed Mission which forced its way to Lhasa in 1904 and who is still remembered with affection; by O'Connor his chief interpreter, and afterwards the first British Trade Agent at Gyantse, who was held in warm affection by the Panchen Lama and was nicknamed by the Tibetans *Kusho Sahib*, or 'Perfect Gentleman'; by Charles Bell, the close confidant of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, and author of the most practical manual of the Tibetan language and of four standard works on Tibet; by the Americans Suydam Cutting, Lowell Thomas, and Theos Bernard; by Arch Steele, then on the staff of the *Chicago Daily News*, to whom I told everything that I knew; by my Chinese colleague in Lhasa (under the Chiang Kai Shek regime) Dr. Tsung-lien Shen and his associate Shen-shi Liu; by my friend and contemporary in Tibet, Professor Guiseppi Tucci, whose books on Tibetan art and history and portfolios of photographs are masterpieces; or by Heinrich Harrer, who arrived in Lhasa a short time after I left the capital for the last time. Freddy Spencer Chapman was with me when I first went



to Lhasa in 1936. His 'Lhasa the Holy City', beautifully illustrated, tells the story of that visit.<sup>1</sup>

This would not be the occasion to attempt to write a general account of Tibet and of what I saw there. It would seem, indeed, that the present need is that those who have recently had access to a country which is now closed to Westerners, and which will never perhaps be the same again, should write accounts of their own particular experiences and of the things which interested them most.

I am often asked how it came about that I was able to visit Lhasa, the Holy and 'Forbidden' City. The answer is simple. Under the Anglo-Tibetan Treaty of 1904 I was entitled to travel as far as Gyantse only. During the sojourn of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in India in 1910-12 a great understanding and friendship had developed between His Holiness and Charles Bell. In 1920 Bell, in response to urgent and repeated invitations from the Dalai Lama, had visited Lhasa. Where Bell had opened the way, his successors Bailey, Weir and Williamson had been able to follow. Now the mantle of Bell was on my shoulders.

On my first visit to Lhasa, in August, 1936, we were a large party. Philip Neame, V.C., came to give the Tibetan Government such advice as they might need on military matters. I had seen much of him when he was on the Staff in Waziristan. A noted slayer of tigers, he was one of those quiet men who never seem to be very busy, but get through much more work than anyone else. He gave good advice, which was appreciated; but a thousand years ago the Tibetan nation turned its face away from military matters. The monks, who form perhaps a quarter of the male population of Tibet, own a great part of the land and have great power in the State, wanted to see no authority in the land stronger than themselves. So not much resulted from Neame's visit. It is dealt with in his book 'Playing with Strife'.

<sup>1</sup> Books on eastern Tibet which I have enjoyed are Eric Teichman's 'Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet'; F. M. Bailey's 'China, Tibet, Assam'; Ronald Kaulback's 'Salween'; John Hanbury Tracy's 'Black River of Tibet'; Marion Duncan's 'The Yangtse and the Yak'; and, more recently, Robert Ekvall's 'Tibetan Skylines'; André Migot's 'Tibetan Marches'; Geoffrey Bull's astonishing 'When Iron Gates Yield'; and Leonard Clark's 'The Marching Wind'. For western Tibet there are Sherring's 'Western Tibet and the British Borderland'; and Tucci and Ghersi's 'Secrets of Tibet'.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Hugh Richardson, recently appointed British Trade Agent at Gyantse, came on with us to Lhasa and so began a long connection with a country to which, critical though he is by nature, he was to lose his heart.

'Doc' was Bill Morgan, a big Rugger-playing Welshman, but as gentle as a woman with anybody who really needed his help. He revelled in cataract operations.

Freddy Spencer Chapman, who had been climbing with Marco Pallis in Sikkim, bristled with jobs and cameras. He was private secretary, cypher expert, official diarist after Neame left, botanist, bird expert, explorer, and a great artist with his cameras, both still and ciné.

Nepean and Dagg of the Royal Signal Corps brought wireless.

In the Chumbi Valley and for a few marches we had the company and counsel of David Macdonald, who had served continuously in Tibet for more than thirty years. As a translator of parts of the Bible he struck out a new line by employing such language as an average Tibetan would be able to understand. His 'Twenty Years in Tibet' is an original source for the period 1905 to 1925. Of the same vintage was Rai Bahadur Norbhu. He had been my interpreter at Gyantse in 1912 and was now visiting Lhasa for about the fifteenth time. His chief assistant was Sonam. Dr. Bo was assistant to Doc Morgan.

After the day or two which by Tibetan custom is allowed to a newcomer to recover from the supposed fatigues of his journey, gifts of food for man and beast, enough to last us for two or three months, began to flow in—carcasses of sheep and pigs, which in the dry climate of Tibet remain eatable for years, and eggs which, even if they were not very fresh, were kindly meant; quarters of yak; and mounds of butter. With them or after them came the givers and whole days from morning to evening were taken up with courtesies. Bell and his successors having been accorded the honorary status of Prime Minister, everybody below that rank paid the first call. As the visitors came and went, Freddy Chapman photographed them. After that it was my duty to return the calls of all officials of a certain rank. On these return visits I offered acceptable gifts of some value. These would be reciprocated when the time came to leave Lhasa. Often the reception room in a Tibetan house is also a private chapel. The walls are hung with



## LHASA

religious pictures and there is a table laden with bowls of holy water.

The late summer—which may be compared with an English summer at its best—and the early autumn are the great season in Lhasa for parties, which go on from midday until the evening. Everybody of importance is invited to them. While menservants serve more dishes in the old Chinese style than anybody can eat—bird's nest soup and sharks' fins and very very old eggs may be amongst the delicacies—beautiful girls come round and urge each guest in turn to drink. They are said to have the right to run a long pin into a guest who hesitates.

Soon after the start of the three-hundred-mile journey from Sikkim I had fallen sick and by the end of the first few weeks in Lhasa I was definitely ill. Perhaps it was the best thing that could have happened. There are times when the mere presence of a friend counts for more than anything that he may do or say. The Tibetans were despondent at the long delay which was taking place between the death of the masterful Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1933 and the discovery of his successor. Nor did they know what to make of the recent visit to Lhasa, against their inclination, of the Chinese General Huang Mu Sung. We were living in the country house of the Kundeling monastery half a mile out of Lhasa. It was called De Kyi Lingka, the Garden of Well-being and Happiness. Past us flowed a branch of the Kyi Chu river. Beyond the wall of our small garden lay the open river-plain, where men and women were busy from before dawn until dark threshing out wheat and barley and peas, and monks were taking their annual bath. Abiding recollections of three weeks' sickness are the haunting songs of men and women as they urged on teams of yaks and bullocks to tread out corn, or as they beat out grain with flails and winnowed it; and the enduring tenderness of Doc. He knew how to suit himself to the patient of the moment. If it was the prettiest girls who most often needed his injections, he was not slow to congratulate them on their charms. Tibetan patients are tough and loud laughter would come from the primitive mud building where he and Dr. Bo had their surgery.

When I was better, I had repeated proof of the genuineness of Tibetan hospitality. Without being made to feel at all awkward, I was able to take my own simple food to parties and to eat and



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

drink as much or as little as I liked. With similar kindness the Regent suggested that I might care to spend time in the Norbhu Lingka. A thoughtful act.

When winter was coming on I telegraphed to the Government of India that I was doing nothing particular in Lhasa, and that I thought I had better go on doing it until the spring. They were quick to understand and we stayed on. Our reward was when, before we left in the spring, Tsarong Dzasa, who knew something of India, told me that our being in Lhasa had been like the shade of a great tree in a dry land.

Our chief link with the Tibetans was Rai Bahadur Norbhu, O.B.E. and later C.B.E. Perhaps his greatest asset was the fact that he was a man who had no guile in him. He was full of life and experience and he was trusted. The only time I ever saw him put out was when I told him that it was not customary to wear both the O.B.E. and the C.B.E. decorations at the same time. Some years later, an hour before he died, he sat up in bed and called the doctors fools for suggesting that he was ill. In dealings with the Tibetan Government the best thing was to discuss a line of action with him and to give him plenty of time to work up to it. Originally a low-paid clerk in the Commissariat at the time of the Young-husband Mission to Lhasa, he had technically deserted from the Army in order to become clerk to O'Connor when he founded the Gyantse Trade Agency. He had little education, lots of common sense, a ready laugh and infinite guts.

We owed a lot also to Freddy Spencer Chapman. We had a special arrangement with Kodak in London. As soon as he had taken a few rolls of 'Kodachrome' film they were sent off by Tibetan post to Gyantse, which took about four days; then by the Trade Agent's post to Gangtok, which took another two or three days; and from India by air to London. Kodak gave them priority and telegraphed out comments. In a little more than a month the films would be back in Lhasa, to the delight of all who came to see them. The sight of themselves on the screen was convincing proof to Tibetan audiences that what they saw was real. A film of King George and Queen Mary was immensely popular. So also were Charlie Chaplin, and Rin Tin Tin, a splendid Alsatian now perhaps forgotten. The room in which the films were shown would be packed far beyond suffocation point. How Freddy stood it I do



## LHASA

not know. Tibetans laugh at just the same things and in the same tone, and appreciate beauty in just the same things, as Englishmen. Working in a room not far off while films were being shown, I knew exactly what point in a well-known film had been reached by the gusts of laughter. There was intense sympathy for the cheee-ild whom Rin Tin Tin, falsely accused of sheep-killing, rescued from the wicked Condor of the Rocky Mountains—or Andes, or wherever it was. To Tibetans all things that are good of their kind are good; and the Regent thought it natural to ask for a film show—Charlie Chaplin and all—to be put on in his private chapel.

In the winter we skated and had mounted paper-chases. Also, for better or worse, we introduced soccer to Lhasa. A team we defeated wrote in suggesting that in future, if we wore hob-nailed boots, we should make them available for our opponents also. The game caught on. After we had left, competition became so keen, and spectators so many, that the Tibetan Government was forced to the conclusion that more money was being spent on uniforms for teams, and more man-days of labour were being lost, than the country could afford. So the game was suppressed.

So far as I remember, the most difficult piece of business to be got through while we were in Lhasa was to obtain permission for another Everest Expedition. Tibetans think that mountains are inhabited by spirits which are better left undisturbed and regard the climbing of a great peak in much the same light in which we might regard the climbing of the spire of a cathedral. With Tennyson's Tithonus, they are inclined to ask:

Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of man,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

Charles Bell relates that one day he told the Dalai Lama, who was interested in all that was going on in the world, that Miss Amy Johnson had flown solo to Australia in record time. His Holiness remarked, "But why was the honourable lady in such a hurry?"

From the Tibetan point of view Everest Expeditions were also regrettable because, in areas where few crops grew, they used up local supplies and labour which was needed for cultivation and

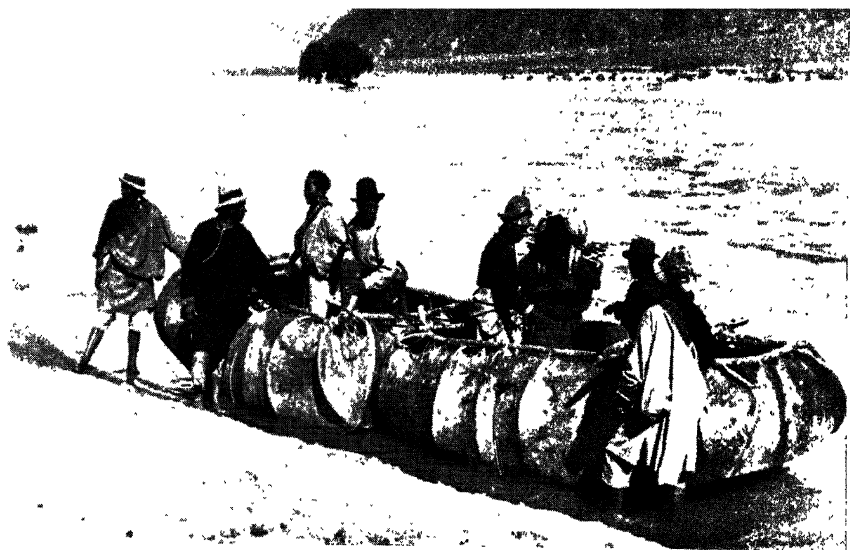


## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

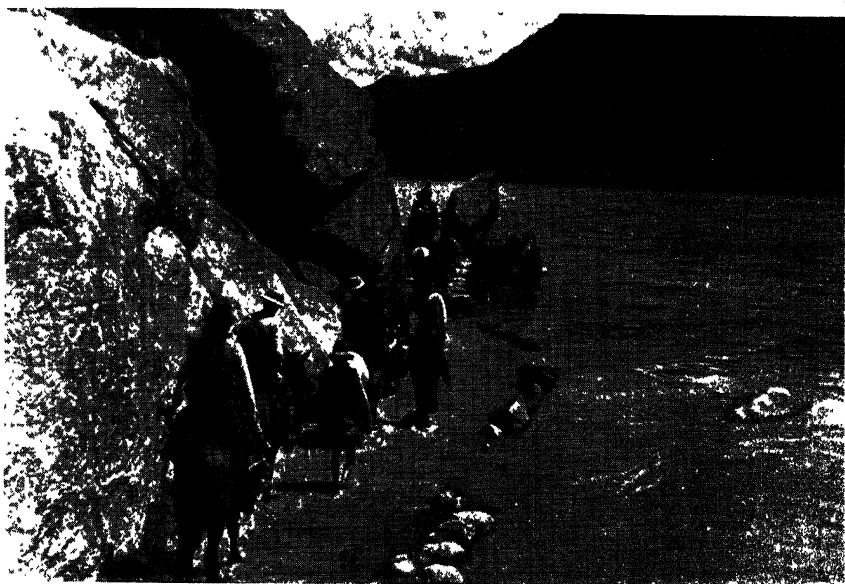
harvest. But the Tibetans are quick to make allowances for the different points of view of other people. Not without reluctance they gave permission, and help over supplies and transport, for one Everest Expedition after another. The Tibetan attitude towards the climbing of great mountains was reflected in the suggestion of R. L. G. Irving, who trained George Mallory, that Kanchenjunga should be left inviolate for ever. The recent conquerors of the mountain respected these sentiments by stopping five feet short of the summit.

We stayed on for the seeing-out of the Old Year and the seeing-in of the New, which will be described later. The Government of India agreed that, if it could be arranged, Hugh Richardson might stay on in Lhasa after I left. A semi-permanent Mission would be something entirely new and discussion of the matter with the Tibetan Government promised to present difficulties. After consultation with Norbhu it seemed best to cut the knot. At a final interview with the Tibetan Cabinet in their office in the Great Temple, I raised some complicated question which obviously could not be settled on the spur of the moment. When this was pointed out by the senior member of the Cabinet, I replied that it did not matter because Hugh Richardson would be staying on indefinitely. The Cabinet swallowed this; and Hugh stayed on.





Yak-hide boat for crossing the Tsangpo



The road to Lhasa. Tsangpo Valley







## XVI

### *Lhasa: The Fourteenth Dalai Lama*

1940

MY second visit to Lhasa was in connection with the Installation of the present Dalai Lama. Leaving Sikkim about the middle of January, 1940, I had as travelling companions Harry Staunton of the Indian Medical Service and Rai Sahib Sonam, my Personal Assistant. In the Chumbi Valley we learned the latest Lhasa news from Tsarong Dzasa who was taking his wife down to hospital in India. Old memories were revived when we visited a small monastery under the slopes of Mount Chumolhari where I had met the late Dalai Lama on his return from India in 1912. The satisfaction of the Tibetan Government at the fact that His Majesty's Government and the Government of India wished to be represented at the Installation was indicated by the appointment as official guide from Gyantse to Lhasa of Kusho Dingja who, as Jongpen of Shigatse, held the most important District charge in Tibet; by the excellence of the arrangements for the journey from Gyantse onwards; and by the provision of a large and smart guard of honour on arrival at Lhasa. A further gracious act was the appointment as official guides for the period to be spent in Lhasa of Kusho Kheme Se, who had taken part in the finding of the Dalai Lama, and Tsendron Choda, an experienced monk official.

No European, so far as I am aware, had ever before been present in Lhasa at the time of the Installation of a Dalai Lama. In what follows the occasional use of the present tense is due to the fact that I wrote the account immediately after the occurrence of the principal events.

According to the Buddhist religion death is constantly followed by re-birth—dog or fish being re-born as man, woman, bird, snake or any other animal, and man perhaps as worm or flea. A good life merits re-birth on a higher plane, until at last by



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

goodness man may attain to nirvana. One who, having attained the right to nirvana, consents to be re-born for the benefit of his fellow creatures is called a Bodhisattva.

Various gods, or aspects of the godhead, and remarkable personalities of former times, are held to be present in the world in human form. The persons in whom they are incarnate are known as Trulku-s, or 'change-bodies'. Dalai is a Mongolian word which means Ocean. Lama means one to whom unlimited gratitude is due and, by inference, a teacher of religion. The Dalai Lamas are Bodhisattvas in whom is incarnate Chenrezi, the God of Mercy.

Similarly the Panchen Lama (often mis-named the Tashi Lama), whose seat is at Tashi Lhunpo near Shigatse, is held to be the incarnation of O Pa Me, the God of Boundless Light.

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama had been born in 1876, had held the reins of government since 1893, and in 1933, full of wisdom and still full of energy, had 'retired to the heavenly fields'. On his death the task which confronted Church and State in Tibet was not to select a successor, but to seek for and to find the child in whom Chenrezi had become incarnate. It was not necessary that the child should have been born just at the time of the death of his predecessor, or very soon after it. An interval might have elapsed before Chenrezi found and entered his new human abode. It was expected that, as on former occasions, there would be indications of the direction or directions in which search should be made and that the child would be found to possess physical and mental attributes similar to those of his predecessors.

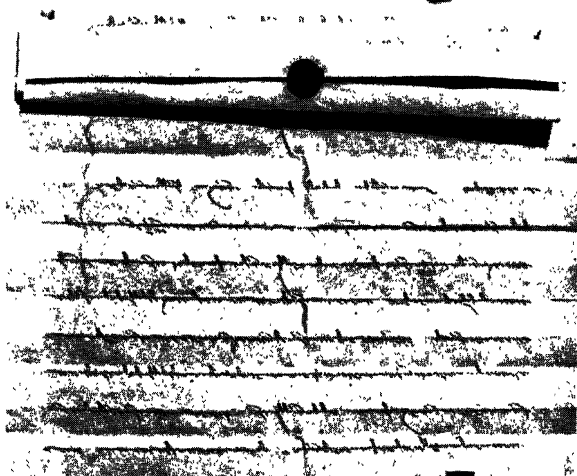
The Tibetan Government instructed all local authorities in Tibet to be on the alert for news of the birth of any remarkable boy and of any marvellous signs in connection with his birth. The year 1934 and part of 1935 passed without any clear indication. With the death of the Panchen Lama in 1937, Tibet found itself bereaved of both of its chief religious leaders.

In the summer of 1935 the Regent visited the holy lake of Cho Lhamo—ten days' journey east from Lhasa—in which some sixty years before the home of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had been revealed. In its still waters he saw the letters Ah, Kah, Mah; a three-storied monastery with gilded roof and turquoise tiles; a twisting road which led east of the monastery to a bare hillock





Rai Bahadur Norbhu  
and the  
Everest permit



The Everest permit







## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

of earth shaped like a pagoda; and, opposite the hillock, a small house with eaves of an unfamiliar type. The exact meaning of the vision was obscure but it was thought probable that Ah indicated that the new Dalai Lama had been born somewhere in the Chinese frontier district of Amdo, south-east of Lake Kokonor. Further indications that the child should be sought somewhere to the east of Lhasa were afforded by the State Oracle and the Oracles of certain monasteries, each of whom, when in a state of trance, had faced towards the east and had thrown a scarf in that direction: and in the Potala two portents had been observed. It is the custom in Tibet, in the case of the Dalai Lamas and of some others who have led lives of eminent saintliness, not to dispose of the body after death in one of the several ways which are normal in Tibet, but to embalm it. Pending the completion of a fitting shrine, the body of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, embalmed, swathed in muslins, and the face covered by a lifelike effigy, had been placed on the throne of the lesser audience-hall which looks south over the main courtyard of the Potala. Thousands came to see the dead body, touch the throne and present a scarf. All night the hall would be securely locked. Twice it had been found in the morning that the body, which on the previous day had been facing south, had turned its head to the east. And to the east of the new shrine, on a pillar of well-seasoned wood set in a great block of stone, and on the east side of the pillar, there appeared a great fungus. Other signs also indicated that the new Dalai Lama should be sought in the east.

Accordingly in the spring of 1937 parties were sent out eastwards from Lhasa to make search, each under the Trulku of a monastery. Another sign was observed when the Oracle of the Samye monastery in a trance gave his breast-plate to the Trulku of the Kyitsang monastery, who had been instructed to set out towards Amdo.

From time to time during the next two and a half years reports became current in Lhasa that boys who might be regarded as likely candidates had been discovered in various places. But the Regent and the Tibetan Government were silent.

Early in the autumn of 1939 it became generally known in Lhasa that a young boy, in regard to whom there could be no possible doubt, had been found near Kumbum and was expected



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

to reach Nagchuka, ten days' march north-east of Lhasa, on about September 20th. On September 13th Shappe (Cabinet Minister) Bhondong with a party of Tibetan officials, which had been assembled secretly and in haste, left Lhasa for Nagchuka by forced marches. It was important that the Dalai Lama should enter Lhasa before the end of the eighth month of the Tibetan year, the ninth of the current Earth-Hare year being a black, or unlucky, month.

Fast as Bhondong Shappe travelled, two officers, Kusho Ringang and Lachak Luishar, had pushed on a few marches ahead of him with a mule-litter in which, long before dawn on the morning of September 20th, a sleeping child, accompanied by his family, by Kyitsang Trulku and his associates and by a party of armed Chinese Mohammedan traders on their way to Mecca, was being hurried along towards Nagchuka by the light of lanterns. Bhondong Shappe also had been travelling through the night. A perfect day had just begun to dawn and signs of great good omen were lighting up the sky when the parties met. In token of reverence and homage Bhondong Shappe placed a white silk scarf in the hands of Kyitsang Trulku—for not even a Cabinet Minister may present a scarf direct to the Dalai Lama—and received one in exchange. It had been thought that the child might be asleep, but, unprompted, he put out his hands between the curtains of the litter and laid them on Bhondong Shappe's head.

The sun was rising when, three miles nearer Nagchuka, the parents of the new Dalai Lama, who hitherto had not known that their son was anything more than one of several candidates, saw a crowd of standard-bearers and officials and an elaborate camp laid out in the form of a square. The Dalai Lama was taken to a throne which had been hurriedly constructed of dry clods of earth. Bhondong Shappe prostrated himself thrice, handed to the child a letter from the Regent acknowledging him as Dalai Lama, and—in Tibet significant deeds are often preferred to any pronouncement in words—offered gifts which, while they can be presented to other Trulkus besides the Dalai Lama, can only be presented to the highest Trulku present. These were the Offering to All the Gods, in the form of a butter-cake with a number of turrets, which is called Mende; an image of the God of Endless Life; a model of a Chorten (a Buddhist monument);



## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

and a miniature holy book. To the parents and other relations he presented dresses and jewellery. The child was then placed in the golden palanquin of the Dalai Lamas and the party set out to cover the remaining ten miles to Nagchuka, where the child, placed on the throne of the Dalai Lamas in the monastery which is called 'The Palace of True Peace', held an official reception. After a day's halt the journey was continued towards Lhasa.

On October 6th the young Dalai Lama reached Rigya, two miles east of Lhasa, where he was received with divine honours by the Regent and all important lay and ecclesiastical officials, and was met by representatives of the British Mission and of the Chinese, the Nepalese, and the Ladakhi Mohammedans resident in Lhasa. Two days later he entered Lhasa, where he was universally acclaimed as Dalai Lama, and visited the Great Temple. In the streets of Lhasa he was greeted by the two principal Oracles. Those who have seen a Tibetan Oracle in a trance will understand why people marvelled, not at the fact that horses took fright, but at the sight of a child who was entirely undisturbed. The Dalai Lama then proceeded to the private residence of the Dalai Lamas at the Norbhu Lingka.

For reasons of State the fact that the Dalai Lama had been discovered had hitherto been kept secret. But now, the need for secrecy being past, the actual facts of the discovery became known. At Jeykundo the party under Kyitsang Trulku received news of three remarkable boys in the direction of Amdo. The Tibetan Government had provided each of the search parties with a number of articles which had belonged to the thirteenth Dalai Lama, and with exact copies. It was anticipated that, as had happened at the discovery of former Dalai Lamas, the genuine reincarnation would pick out the things which had belonged to his predecessor and would show other signs of superhuman intelligence and that no other child would succeed in these tests. And so it proved. Of the three boys, one was found to have died and the second failed to display any interest in the things which had belonged to the late Dalai Lama and ran away crying. But Kyitsang Trulku, on approaching the home of the third, felt a great uplifting of heart. He found himself in surroundings already familiar from the description which the Regent had given of his vision in the lake. He saw a three-storied monastery, with golden roof and turquoise



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

tiles, called after the Saint Ka-ma-pa whose tomb was opposite the monastery (the name fitted in with the letters Kah, Mah, which the Regent had seen reflected in the holy lake). From the monastery a twisting road led on east to a house such as the Regent had described.

Before entering the house Kyitsang Trulku disguised himself as a servant and, sending his companion into the main room of the house, went into an outer room which was used as a kitchen. A child was playing there. When Kyitsang entered, the child at once went up to him, said "Lama, Lama", and seized his necklace, which had belonged to the late Dalai Lama. A few days later, in the presence of other members of his party, which included the District Magistrate of Nagchuka and the lay official Kheme Se (who had not been informed of the discovery), Kyitsang tested the child with various possessions of the late Dalai Lama and exact copies. Out of four necklaces the child took two which had belonged to the late Dalai Lama and placed them round his neck, and similarly out of two small drums he chose the right one, which he began to play. In the imitations he took no interest. There remained the choice between two walking-sticks. The child first took the wrong one, examined it, shook his head and dropped it. He then took the right one and would not let it go. It was found also that the child, in common with his predecessor, possessed three of the physical signs which distinguish the incarnations of Chenrezi. When Kyitsang Trulku prepared to leave, the child took him by the hand and wanted to go with him and wept at being left behind. It was related that at the time of his birth there had been a rainbow over the house.

The Dalai Lama was born on June 6th, 1935, his original name being Lhamo Dhondup. His father, Chökyong Tsering, and his mother, Sonamtsö, who were of yeoman class, were both about thirty-five years of age at the time of his birth. Their home Kumbum is celebrated in Tibetan history as the place where Tsongkapa, the great reformer of Tibetan Buddhism, was born. They have three children older than the Dalai Lama and one who is younger.

On November 23rd, 1939, the Dalai Lama proceeded in state from the Norbhu Lingka to the Great Temple which lies below the Potala. There on November 24th he and his next elder brother



## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

were initiated as monks and he assumed new names which mean 'The Holy One, the Tender Glory, Mighty in Speech, of Excellent Intellect, of Absolute Wisdom, Holding the Doctrine, The Ocean'. On that day the Dalai Lama received the minor seal of the Dalai Lamas which is named the Gya Tam.

The Dalai Lama returned from the Temple to the Norbhu Lingka, where he frequently granted audience and conferred blessing. He was not yet five years old; but all were struck by the fixity of his gaze, his personality and the extraordinary attention and deftness with which he performed his priestly duties of attending to ceremonial, granting blessing, and knotting scarves to be conferred on those deemed worthy of this special honour. All who saw him were convinced that he was the one and only true Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Those in close attendance on him noted his preference for associates of the late Dalai Lama, his special kindness to the late Dalai Lama's servants and his love of music and of flowers.

In Tibetan religious and political theory the individuals who are the human embodiments of the Dalai-hood die, but the Dalai-hood persists. The emergence of a Dalai Lama is therefore in essence the return of one who has been temporarily absent to resume an authority and functions which are already his own. The culminating event in the assumption, or resumption, of authority by a Dalai Lama (subject to the continuance of the Regency during minority) is the occupation by him of the Golden Throne in the Potala. This ceremony the Tibetans call the Ser Thri Nga Sol—the 'request to occupy the golden throne'.

In fixing dates for this ceremony, which would last several days, the Tibetan Government had to take two main considerations into account. Divination and astrology had indicated suitable occasions in the first, third and fifth months of the New Year, which was due to begin on February 9th. And it would be the desire of as many Tibetans as possible from all parts of the country to be present. The New Year, with the annual celebrations of the driving out of the evil influences of the Old Year, the bringing in of the New Year and the twenty-one days of the Great Prayer, a period of frequent and magnificent religious observances intermixed with traditional pageantry, always attracts to Lhasa tens of thousands of monks, pilgrims and villagers,



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

so that the normal population of the city is trebled. Cold as the month of February is in Tibet, it is reckoned that by the end of January the period of the coldest spells—of which according to Tibetan tradition there are three—is past; and it is the season at which, the harvest and the threshing finished, the land not yet ready for the plough, and flocks of sheep needing little attention, Tibetans are best able to make holiday. It is also the time at which the Thirteenth Dalai Lama used normally to leave the Norbhu Lingka to take up his residence at the Potala for some weeks. And it is a time when all Tibetans, wherever they may be observing the New Year, direct their thoughts towards the Golden Throne. It was thus for many good reasons, and with consideration for the happiness of all in Tibet, that the Tibetan Government fixed the first month, and the dates in the first month which had been declared to be most auspicious, for the entry of the Dalai Lama into the Potala and for the occupation by the Dalai Lama of the throne of his predecessors.

The Tibetans are amongst the most natural people in the world. What counts for most in their ceremonies is the atmosphere of awe, joy, reverence, love, exaltation, and not seldom of fun, which surrounds them.

On February 7th a great crowd of the inhabitants of Lhasa and of visitors from all parts of Tibet, together with many of the British, Chinese, Nepalese, and other foreigners in Lhasa, crowded the roofs and galleries which surround the main court of the Potala, to witness the ceremony of the driving out of the evil influences of the Old Year. In turn a hundred monks with gleaming censers, cymbals, and golden drums, Hashang the genial God of good luck with his troupe of minute attendants in masks, black-hat dancers, and the many other participants in the day-long ceremony, entered the courtyard down the steep steps which lead from the inner recesses of the Potala. Above, set in the hundred-foot face of the main building, were embrasures and balconies, in three perpendicular rows and four tiers, gay with silk fringes floating in the breeze and with dresses of every colour. In the centre of the highest tier, outside the smaller assembly hall where the embalmed body of the late Dalai Lama had lain pending the completion of its golden shrine, was the still empty balcony of the Dalai Lama. To its right was the Regent, invisible



## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

most of the time behind thin gold curtains. Elsewhere, according to their rank, were seated the Cabinet and monk and lay officials of different grades. Many turned their eyes to the place where, next to the Cabinet, the family of the Dalai Lama were to be seen, keenly interested in their first experience of Tibetan pageantry on a great scale.

On February 9th the members of the British Mission, alone of foreigners, were privileged to witness the religious celebration of the New Year in the main hall of the Potala. They presented silk scarves at the vacant throne of the Dalai Lama and to the Regent and the Prime Minister and shared in the ceremonial tea and food which are then served. Other foreigners attended the less religious ceremony of the next day. And thus for several days the observances of the New Year pursued their customary course.

February 13th was fixed for the reception of the British Mission by the Dalai Lama at the Norbhu Lingka. It was a calm and brilliant morning. A powdering of fresh snow had fallen on the hills round Lhasa but a foretaste of spring was in the air. Bar-headed geese, mallard, teal, goosander and Brahmini duck, aware of the security of the Lhasa valley, were making much of the opportunities afforded by the melting of the ice on the side-streams of the Kyi Chu. To members of the British party the Norbhu Lingka was already familiar and well-loved ground owing to the kindness of the Regent who had allowed them free and frequent access to every part of the Jewel Garden when, three years before, it had been unoccupied.

The hall in which the Dalai Lama grants audiences at the Norbhu Lingka is a simple room of moderate size, lighted from a central square shaft supported on painted pillars. The walls, dim behind the pillars, are covered with frescoes in oil paint. In the interval between the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the arrival of the Fourteenth the throne had been vacant, but always the room had been kept as in the time of the Thirteenth, with fresh food ready by the throne, fresh holy water in brass bowls and pots of such flowers as were in season. The courtyard outside was thronged with monks on duty and other monks who had come to receive a blessing. Beyond the courtyard there had gathered a small crowd of men, women and children, villagers



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

from near Lhasa, and shepherds wearing a single garment of sheepskin with the wool inside, their homes indicated by feature and dialect and by the different styles in which the women plait their hair and the variety of their ornaments.

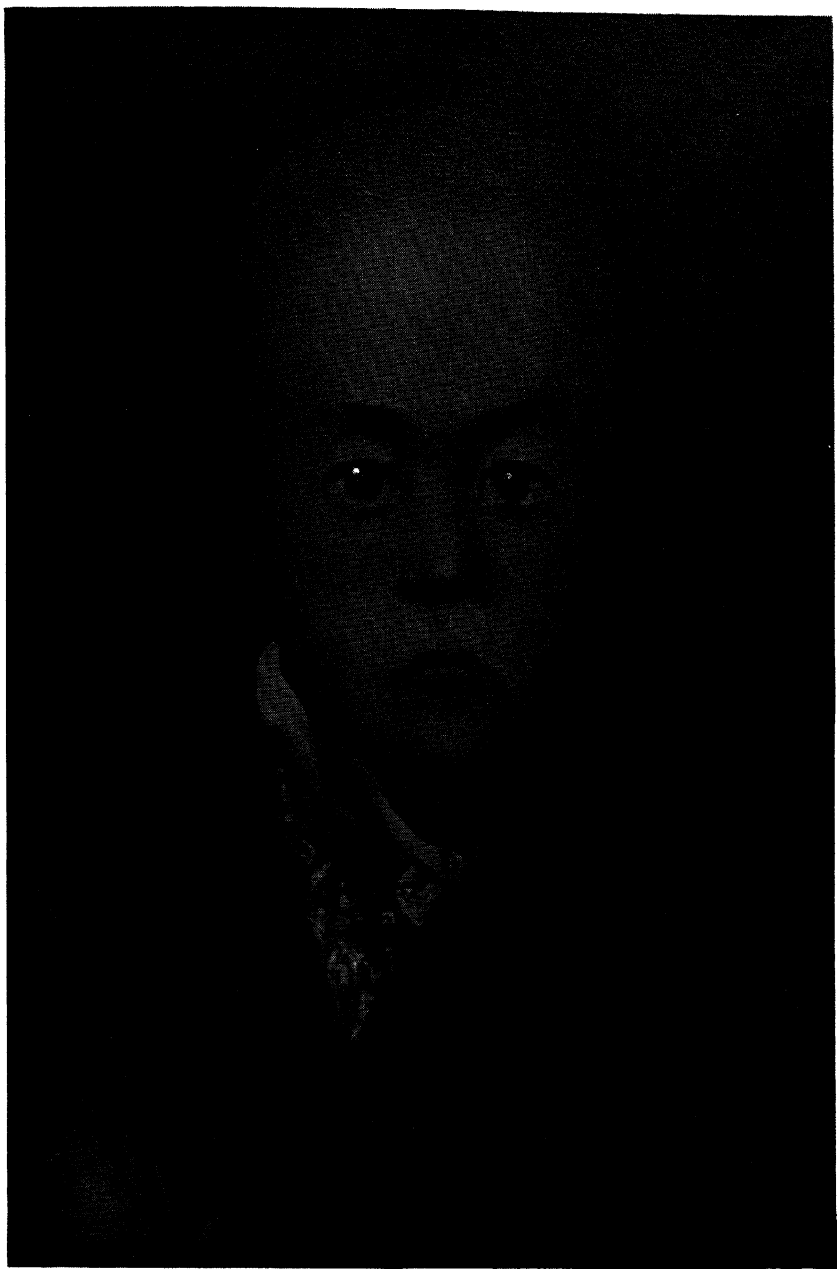
On entering the audience room it was seen that the Dalai Lama, a solid solemn but very wide-awake boy, red-cheeked and closely shorn, wrapped warm in the maroon-red robes of a monk and in outer coverings, was seated high on his simple throne, cross-legged in the attitude of Buddha. Below and round him on the graded steps of the throne, looking like giants in comparison with the child, were five abbots—the Chikyab Khenpo who is the head of the Ecclesiastical Department in Tibet and ranks as a Cabinet Minister; the Dronyer Chempo who deals with all applications for audience with the Dalai Lama; Kyitsang Trulku who discovered the Dalai Lama; the Zimpon Khenpo, Lord of the Bed-chamber, who when he was District Magistrate of Nagchuka had assisted Kyitsang Trulku in the search; and the Sopön Khenpo who is responsible for the Dalai Lama's food.

On the steps below the throne, to right and left, were pots of sprouting barley and of the pink primula—*malacoides*—which seems always to be ready to find a new home. I soon realized the truth of the report that the child appears to recognize the associates of his predecessor. I noticed the steadiness of his gaze, the beauty of his hands, and the devotion and love of the Abbots who attend him. All seemed to be aware that they were in the presence of a Presence.

First came some of those few who might expect the two-handed blessing; then monks who, down to the most junior, are entitled to the blessing by one hand; and then the laity, villagers and shepherds, each with his small offering of at least a shred of white scarf and a few coins, some to receive the blessing by two hands or by one, but most to have their foreheads touched by one of the Abbots in attendance with a tassel of bright silk ribbons which had been blessed by the Dalai Lama.

After a time the column of those seeking a blessing was held back and the staff and servants of the British Mission approached the throne in turn. I presented a white silk scarf, a scarf which had been blessed by the Dalai Lama was placed round my neck





The Dalai Lama before his Installation







## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

and two small, cool, firm hands were laid steadily on my head. The other members of the party followed in turn.

Twice tea, and once rice, was served, as a form of mutual hospitality which was also a sacrament. At the first serving of tea the Sopön Khenpo advanced, produced his box-wood tea-bowl from the folds of his dress and tasted the tea to make sure that it was not poisoned. Then the Dalai Lama was served and then all present. On the second occasion Rai Bahadur Norbhu—on behalf of the British Mission who were permitted to provide the second tea and the food of the day—advanced and performed the same duty. Meanwhile we had produced our gifts—a gold clock with a nightingale that pops out and sings, a pedal motor-car, and a tricycle.

And so the audience ended. The Dalai Lama was lifted down from his throne by the Chikyab Khenpo and left the hall of audience holding the hands of two Abbots who towered on either side of him, but looking back at the toys which had gripped his attention. Within a minute his eight-year-old brother was on the spot to find out how everything worked, additionally keen and anxious because, he said, if he did not at once find out all about everything, the Dalai Lama would certainly beat him. It appears that His Holiness has a strong will and is already learning to exercise the privileges of his position. The little monk was soon going round the smooth floor of the audience chamber in the pedal car. The visit ended with congratulations to Kyitsang Trulku on his great discovery.

On other days visits were paid to the Regent (whose official title changes, once a Dalai Lama has been found, from Gye-tsap, or Vice-roy, to Si-kyong or Protector); to the Prime Minister; and to the Cabinet.

Then to the Norbhu Lingka again, to return the calls of the Chikyab Khenpo and the Dronyer Chempo and to meet the parents of the Dalai Lama. Modestly housed, the Chikyab Khenpo seems to subordinate all other cares of Church and State to what is now his one main purpose in life—to serve his young master and to help him to grow up in the way in which, as the earthly habitation of Chenrezi and the Lord and High Priest of Tibet, he should go. With the Chikyab Khenpo, as at the reception a few days before, I sensed the atmosphere, and almost the music,



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

of 'Unto us a son is born . . . and the Government shall be upon his shoulders'. His face lights up as he talks of the love of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama for birds, beasts and flowers, of his kindness to those who served him, and of how these gifts appear to have been inherited by the present Dalai Lama. The Dronyer Chempo is equally at one with the task to which it has pleased Providence to call him.

In Amdo those who can afford it marry young and, in addition to the parents and the two brothers of the Dalai Lama, aged twelve and eight, there was the elder brother's little wife, a most attractive girl of about the same age as her husband. The eight-year-old brother, who became a monk on the same day as the Dalai Lama, seemed fully to realize that, having met members of the Mission before, it fell to him to break the ice; and he was soon busy playing 'Is Mr. Fox at home?' The mother is identifiable in Lhasa as the one lady who dresses in the Amdo style and wears her hair in three plaits. The father is a man of quiet and gentle poise, with a serious face on which smiles go 'out and in'. The mother is surely one in a million, the worthy mother of a Dalai Lama. The children are sturdy and intelligent and, as might be expected, have easily out-distanced their parents in learning Tibetan. No family could appear to be more closely knit. The happiness in their faces must stand for real happiness in their lives.

While almost each day of the New Year had its particular religious or secular observance, thousands of men, women and children, some with pet sheep and some with dogs, and most of them turning prayer-wheels in their hands, were daily performing the five-mile circuit of the Holy Walk round the Potala—some walking, some, in coarse leather gauntlets and aprons and with patches of mud or dust on forehead, nose and chin, by prostration, and some by prostration sideways. When a rest is needed, or it is time to break off for the day, a stone is set to mark the forward limit of the last prostration.

The Dalai Lama has enjoyed kingly good fortune in regard to weather. In Tibet this is not a simple matter, a fresh fall of snow, which is auspicious for an occasion of state, being considered inauspicious for a wedding or on New Year's Day. It was just such another morning as that of our visit to the Norbhu Lingka



## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

when, eight days later, a mile-long riot of colour assembled to escort the Dalai Lama from the Norbhu Lingka to the Potala. At dawn almost every person in Lhasa who would not be on duty in the procession or at the Potala had set out to take up a position on the route. This leads from the main gate of the Norbhu Lingka along an avenue of poplar trees, across the Holy Walk, and on, past the Kundeling monastery and the bare hill on which the College of Lamaistic Medicine stands, to near the city gate with its strings of tinkling bells. Here were assembled many ladies of the chief families in Lhasa, gay in head-dresses set with seed pearls, coral and turquoise, over which were looped the black coils of their long hair—eight-inch ear ornaments of turquoise cut flat and set in gold gem-studded charm boxes—silk robes of every colour, with silk shirt sleeves of some contrasting colour turned back over the wrist—cascades of pearls and gems over the right shoulder—and, in the case of married women or grown-up girls, aprons in rainbow stripes of green, red, purple, green, gold, green, purple, or whatever succession of bright colours the individual weaver had chosen. In Tibet it is not the rich only whose women on a day of festival are gay, and in Tibet all spectacles are free to all.

Leaving the city gate to the right, the route sweeps round the base of the Potala, past the high wall and blue lake of the Snake Temple, on past the northern face of the Potala and up the broad ascent, alternate steps and stone-paved slopes, which forms the southern approach. Along the route were men and women tending incense crocks, set on walls or carried on arm or shoulder, fed with artemisia and other fragrant herbs; troupes of strolling dancers, some in head-dresses of eagle feathers, some in masks; mummers; bands and drummers; clean-featured shepherds dressed in sheepskin, their broad-browed and plump wives wearing their hair in a hundred closely plaited ringlets; monks of every age from four years upwards in maroon robes, often tattered; beggars; farmers; thousands turning prayer-wheels of every device and size.

First in the procession came servants, on ponies and on foot, dressed in green tunics, blue breeches and broad red-tasselled hats, carrying the Dalai Lama's food, kitchen ware, garments and bed-clothes; grooms, to be ready for their masters at the Potala;



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

attendants bearing tall banners to ward off evil spirits; some members of the Chinese delegation; high Lamas followed by the State Oracle and the Chief Secretaries; the led ponies of the Dalai Lama in gorgeous silk trappings; the head monks of the Potala monastery in claret robes fringed with gold and silver embroidery; junior lay officials in long mantles of many colours, black shirts, and white boat-shaped hats set sideways on the head and tied down under the ears; lay officers in ascending order of rank, Teijis, Dzasas, Shappes, all stiff in heavy brocade. And then, through the clouds of incense which were drifting across the route, and between ranks of standard bearers, came two long double lines of men in loose green uniforms and red hats with white plumes, holding draw-ropes—which would be needed for the climb up the Potala—and men in red with yellow hats bearing, as they moved with short shuffling steps, the yokes which supported the poles of the Dalai Lama's great golden palanquin. The child was invisible behind gold curtains and bright bunches of paper flowers. To his right rear was carried the tall peacock umbrella which is the privilege of the Dalai Lamas. Next came the Regent, under a gold umbrella, dressed in robes of golden silk and a yellow conical hat trimmed with black fox-skin, his horse weighed down with trappings and led by two grooms: then the Dalai Lama's father, mother and brothers: then Abbots and Trulkus from monasteries throughout Tibet, in peaked hats and coats of gold brocade worn over maroon robes. It was seen that some Incarnate Lamas, boys as young as the Dalai Lama himself, were firmly tied to their saddles. Towards the end of the procession came more civil officials, seniors leading, in their traditional gay travelling dress; more monk officials; and finally a giant monk door-keeper of the Potala monastery who with stentorian voice kept back the dense crowds of monks, citizens and villagers who, after the manner of spectators everywhere, were closing in from the sides of the route to accompany the Dalai Lama on his progress.

On arrival at the Potala the Dalai Lama proceeded to his private apartments to rest before the ceremonies of the following days. For several days in succession, and again after an interval for several more days, he would occupy the Golden Throne, confer blessings and receive gifts. The first day, February 22nd, was the



## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

occasion on which the Tibetan Government, both Church and State, would dominate the proceedings in its official capacity. Other days, when also all principal officials of Church and State would be present, were allotted for special participation and presentation of gifts by the Regent, the Chinese delegation and others.

The Tibetan Government proposed that the British Mission should attend with their gifts on the second day and enquired whether we wished to be present on the first day also. They were careful to point out that there was no question of our not being welcome on the first day. The question for consideration was whether attendance on the first day, when there would be no occasion for the presentation of gifts, would tend to detract from the effect of a more official, and also more intimate, appearance on the second day. In matters of ceremony it is usually safe to be guided by the implied wishes of the Tibetan Government, who are past masters in all that falls within the sphere of courtesy. It was therefore decided that we should attend on the second day only, in company with our good friends the representatives of Tashi Lhunpo (the seat of the Panchen Lama) and of Sikkim. The record of the events of the first day is based on the evidence of many who were present.

The Potala is the definite seat of authority in Tibet and it is not until he has entered the Potala that the Dalai Lama receives the Great Seal.

The essence of the Ser-Thri-Nga-Sol is the public acknowledgement of his people by the Dalai Lama, and of the Dalai Lama by his people. Probably no ceremony in the western world is nearly equivalent, but there are affinities to many ceremonies which we know. There are elements of the assertion by all of their duty towards their King and of a King's duty towards his people; of a long-drawn-out 'God Save The King. Long Live The King'; of mystical union and of mutual society, help, and comfort; and most certainly of communion and of joy and thanksgiving. My mind was carried back to the great Durbar at Delhi, when King George and Queen Mary sat to receive the homage of those who were already their loyal subjects and uplifted them by their presence. But it was inevitable that thought should travel also to another Child, already God Incarnate when, lying in a manger,



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

He was offered gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh, or when He first visited the Temple which was already His.

By three o'clock in the morning of February 22rd all Lhasa was awake and under a misty moon almost at the full hundreds of officials of Church and State were setting out, with attendants carrying lanterns, to climb the steep ascent to the Potala which loomed above the city in its glory.

The main audience hall of the Potala is a great square room, wholly enclosed, lighted from a central well supported on painted wooden pillars round which, in frequent repetition, are hung the eight lucky signs. What appears to be the north wall, but is really a screen advanced several feet from the actual wall, is covered with hangings of silk appliqué work which depict various religious scenes. Against this screen is set the seven-foot-high throne of the Dalai Lamas. The other three walls, which lie back much farther behind the pillars of the central well than the north screen, are covered with oil paintings, barely visible even by day.

An hour and a half before dawn the members of the Cabinet and other high officials assembled for a first ceremonious drinking of tea in a small hall outside the private apartment of the Dalai Lama. It was still an hour before dawn when in the main hall a giant lictor, with a voice like the roar of a bull and swaying a golden incense censer, ordered silence. All stood, while attendants entered the hall bearing warm wrappings which they arranged reverently on the throne. Other attendants then entered and laid a white carpet bearing the eight lucky signs from the main entrance to the foot of the throne. After a pause there was a blare of trumpets. The door was opened and there entered at a brisk pace a small figure in golden robes and pointed yellow hat with long flaps over the ears, his hands held by the Chikyab Khenpo and the Kalon Lama. With their help he quickly climbed the lower steps in front of the throne. Then he was lifted onto the throne by the Chikyab Khenpo and made warm and comfortable in his wrappings. After the Dalai Lama there had come the Regent dressed in yellow silk, the Prime Minister and the Trulku of the Takta monastery, who with the Regent is responsible for the education of the Dalai Lama, and next the members of the Cabinet, dressed in heavy gold brocade and fur hats, and other



## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

civil officials according to rank. On entering all prostrated themselves before the Dalai Lama. The same five high ecclesiastics who had been in attendance at the reception at the Norbhu Lingka stationed themselves on the steps of the throne, the Regent proceeded to his own throne and all present took their seats.

Monks of the Potala Monastery advanced and in low tones offered prayer for the long life and prosperity of the Dalai Lama. At intervals in the prayer civil officers dressed as monks—maintaining a right established in the days of the Kings of Tibet—presented to the Dalai Lama the eight lucky signs. Then the Regent uttered words in praise of the Dalai Lama and wished him a prosperous reign. He prostrated himself three times before the throne, advanced slowly up the steps and offered a white silk scarf which was received on behalf of the Dalai Lama by the Chikyab Khenpo. The Regent and the Dalai Lama then saluted one another by touching forehead to forehead and the Regent, having received a silk scarf from the Chikyab Khenpo, withdrew to his throne.

After the Regent came the Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet, the family of the Dalai Lama—his mother and little sister-in-law were the only women present in the great assembly—Abbots of monasteries, Incarnation Lamas, a troupe of dancing boys who were to take part in the ceremony, and officials of Church and State. On some the Dalai Lama conferred blessing with both hands; other officials and all monks received the blessing with one hand; and the more lowly received the blessing by tassel, held by the Chikyab Khenpo. Each after passing the throne proceeded to offer a scarf to the Regent and to receive his blessing and then presented a scarf to the Prime Minister. For junior officials and the public the traditional method of approach to the throne is in a close packed swaying line, single file, knees bent, body touching body. The ceremony was essentially similar to that of New Year's Day, except that now the throne of the Dalai Lama was no longer empty. The number of those who sought blessing was so great that the ceremony lasted five hours.

After the Incarnation Lamas had received blessing, the line of those approaching the throne was interrupted to make a place for Mr. Wu Chung-hsin and members of the Chinese delegation.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Meanwhile at intervals two Abbots engaged in shrill debate, each point as it was made being emphasized by crashing the right hand down into or across the left, by the hitching of cloak on shoulder, or by a shrill scream. From time to time tea was served, first to the Dalai Lama from a golden urn with dragon spout and afterwards to all present, each person producing a wooden bowl from the folds of his dress. Rice also was handed round and barley porridge and finally large portions of seethed meat. Three times the ceremony of blessing was suspended to make way for the troupe of twelve dancing boys, gaily dressed and armed with jade battle-axes. They postured in stiff attitudes, made sudden leaps and finally shuffled out backwards. Towards the end great piles of sweetmeats and of pastry bread moulded into fantastic forms, and entire dried carcasses of yaks, oxen and sheep, often complete with horns and tails, and of glistening pigs from which the bristles had been singed, were set out on fifty low square tables in the middle of the hall. There was a wild rush of servants of the Potala and other poor to seize what is deemed to be food from the Dalai Lama's own table; and each secured what he could in spite of a great show of violence on the part of tall attendants armed with whips. There was another dance and another debate; the Dalai Lama sent silk scarves to the principal persons present; and the white carpet with the lucky signs, which had been rolled up after his entry, was unrolled between the throne and the doorway. The Dalai Lama was lifted down from his throne and withdrew as he had come, holding the hands of the Kalon Lama and the Chikyab Khenpo. All then dispersed, the high officials for another ceremonial drinking of tea and others to their homes.

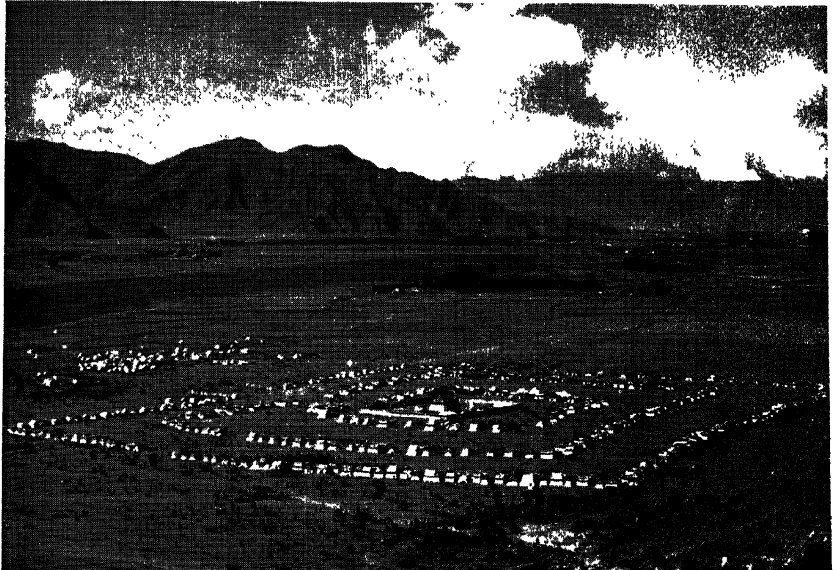
The next day, February 23rd, was a day of general rejoicing, being the fifteenth of the Tibetan first month and full moon. It was a happy thought, fraught it may be hoped with good augury for the future, that the representatives both of Tashi Lhunpo and of the Maharaja of Sikkim, the only Buddhist State in India, should be associated with the British Mission in offerings to the new occupant of the Golden Throne. Snow had fallen during the night and the hills which surround the Lhasa valley were silver-bright when at eight o'clock in the morning we set out, some fifty persons in all in uniforms of many kinds, to ride on our stocky Tibetan ponies, shaggy in their winter coats, to the Potala.





Cataract operation at Lhasa

Camp of the Dalai Lama at Rigya









## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

In front rode the two official guides, one in the voluminous maroon robes and gold-tipped conical hat of a monk official, the other in scarlet cloak turned back with sky-blue and yellow sponge-bag hat. Particularly for the latter, Kheme-Se, who had taken part in the discovery of the Dalai Lama, it was a great day. Then came orderlies in scarlet, some with broad hats fringed with tassels of red silk and some in the conical canework hats with peacock feathers and the home-made kilts which are the national dress of the Lepchas of Sikkim. Rai Bahadur Norbhu was resplendent in the stiff brocade suitable to his rank as Dzasa and Rai Sahib Sonam in the golden robes of a Depon. A crowd of pilgrims acquiring merit by performing the five-mile circuit of the Holy Walk made way for us to pass.

In the interval before the ceremony was due to begin there was time to greet Tibetan friends as they arrived and to take in the rich detail of the assembly hall. To the right of the Dalai Lama's seven-foot throne stood a golden table, inlaid with great rubies and hundreds of turquoises and pearls. In a long anteroom were being set out the gifts which were to be offered that day. Ours included a brick of gold, fresh from the Calcutta Mint, ten sacks of silver, three rifles, six rolls of broadcloth of different colours, a gold watch and chain, field glasses, an English saddle, a picnic case, three stoves, a musical box and a garden hammock. The formal list, which had to be handed in, mentioned also two pairs of budgerigars—of which more later. The Maharaja of Sikkim's gifts included two horses and a number of woven and other products of the Sikkim State. But, for picturesqueness and romance, pride of place must be given to the traditional gifts of Tashi Lhunpo. Each in the reverent care of a separate monk, there were figures of Lord Buddha and of Chenrezi and of other deities, warmly wrapped in coloured silks; holy books; sets of golden silk clothes; sets of the eight lucky signs in gold and in silver; a six-foot elephant tusk; a rhinoceros horn; bags of gold dust; silver ingots of the shape, and perhaps the size, of Cinderella's slippers; many rolls of silk and of cloth and provisions of every kind.

Meanwhile the assembly hall had filled and on re-entering I felt that, solemn and magnificent as the ceremonial might be, the atmosphere was intimate. Seated on raised cushions to the left



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

front of the throne, we found ourselves next to the family of the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama entered at a quick pace, holding the hands of the Kalon Lama and the Chikyab Khenpo. He seemed not to be at all tired by the long ceremony of the day before. Prayer was offered in low tones by the Regent and by the Chief Abbot of Tashi Lhunpo. The Regent then prostrated himself, saluted the Dalai Lama by touching brow to brow, and returned to his seat. The Chief Abbot of Tashi Lhunpo again offered prayer, prostrated, advanced to the throne, presented to the Dalai Lama through the Chikyab Khenpo the same ceremonial gifts which had been offered by Bhondong Shappe near Nagchuka, and received blessing. The other representatives of Tashi Lhunpo followed and meanwhile hundreds of servants of the Tashi Lhunpo monastery shuffled past the throne, bearing their gifts. Tea was served after tasting by an official of the Tashi Lhunpo monastery, which was responsible for the day's food, first to the Dalai Lama and then to all present.

Then came the turn of the British Mission. I advanced to the centre of the space before the throne, saluted the Dalai Lama and presented a silk scarf and symbolic gifts identical with those which had been presented by the Chief Abbot of Tashi Lhunpo. At the same time the gifts from the British Government and Viceroy were brought forward. The Chikyab Khenpo placed round my neck a long silk scarf which had been blessed by the Dalai Lama and the Dalai Lama conferred a more personal blessing by the laying on of both hands. I then retired down the steps of the throne, moved across to the lower throne of the Regent, to whom I presented a scarf, and bowed to the Prime Minister. The other members and personnel of the Mission followed.

The members of the Sikkim delegation took their turn.

As on the previous day and on the first day of the New Year, the proceedings were suspended from time to time for loud religious argument between two Doctors of Divinity and for the troupe of dancing boys. It was noticed that at such less solemn moments the young monk brother of the Dalai Lama would, from his position near the side of steps of the throne, quietly steal up to be near the Dalai Lama and keep him company. Such times also gave opportunity for the exchange of friendly



## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

glances with the parents and children and with friends seated round the hall. But Tibetan dignitaries are also critical and it was learnt afterwards from several sources that Cabinet Ministers and Abbots had noted the exact way in which individual visitors had advanced to the throne, received blessing, or dealt with the tea, rice, seethed meat and other refreshments offered them; but most of all how they had looked at the Dalai Lama and what note the Dalai Lama had taken of them. Finally tables loaded with sweetmeats, bread and the carcasses of various animals were laid out; there was the usual wild rush and belabouring with whips; and the floor was thrice swept so that no precious fragment should be lost. Again tea was served; long white scarves which the Dalai Lama had blessed, and coloured wisps of silk which he had knotted, were distributed to some of those present; the carpet bearing the lucky signs was unrolled; and the Dalai Lama was lifted down from the throne and withdrew, holding the hands of the two chief officers in attendance. Again a main impression produced was the extraordinary interest of the child in the proceedings, his presence, and his infallible skill in doing the right thing to the right person and at the right time. He was perhaps the only person amongst many hundreds who never fidgeted and whose attention never wavered. It was evident that the Ser-Thri-Nga-Sol was indeed the return, in response to prayer, of the Dalai Lama to a throne which by inherent authority was already his.

The same ceremony was performed eight times in all, the only important variation from day to day being in the matter of those whose special opportunity it was to take a main part in the offering of gifts and to provide the ceremonial food. On one day it was the Regent, on others the Chinese delegation, the Cabinet, the National Assembly, lay and monk officials, and representatives of the great monasteries of all parts of Tibet.

Meanwhile the normal observances of the New Year had been in progress. Besides the celebration at the Potala on the first and second days, and a State visit to the Oracle of Nechung on the third day, the New Year is observed privately in every home in Lhasa for three days in a manner and in a spirit which recall our Christmas. On other days old customs are kept up in the form of a race of riderless horses, a championship of arms, a parade of



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

feudal cavalry, and arrow shooting, and there are many religious or semi-religious observances. Of these the most striking occur on the fifteenth and on about the twenty-fifth of the first Tibetan month. On the fifteenth day there is a respite from the rigorous observance of the days of the Great Prayer and the city is given over to unrestrained rejoicing. Round the half-mile circuit of the Great Temple enormous pyramidal structures bearing effigies worked in butter of many colours are set up and, as the full moon rises, dense crowds surge round the holy building. An hour after sunset the Regent was to be seen, accompanied by the parents and family of the Dalai Lama, preceded and followed by military bands, making a careful tour of inspection of the effigies. Lictors forced a way through the masses which thronged the troop-lined streets, lit by flaming cressets borne on long poles. It was thought that the prize for the most popular decoration must be awarded to one, in the centre of which was a sort of mechanical Punch and Judy show which represented the State Oracle in a trance. In spite of the efforts of the lictors the Regent's progress occupied an hour and half. And so home, with memories of the joy and boisterous fun of the Mafeking night of many years ago, on ponies which had had more than enough of the cold and of bands, past the great mass of the Potala, flood-lit by the full moon and set against an incredibly blue night sky studded with flaming stars.

On the twenty-fifth of the first month the scene was the outer court of the Great Temple; the occasion, the aversion of any evil influences or intentions which might be directed against Tibet and the resumption of control of the city by the civil power which had, during the twenty days of the Great Prayer, yielded authority to monk officials of the Drepung monastery. In this, the Iron Dragon year, two of the civil officers most importantly concerned in ceremonial arrangements happened to be the old Rugbeians, Kusho Changopa, known at Rugby as Ringang, and Kusho Kyipup. Changopa was discharging the honourable and costly duty, which comes only once in a lifetime, of organizing and commanding some six hundred feudal cavalry. Kyipup was one of the two City Magistrates of Lhasa.

The principal spectators were the Regent, the Cabinet and the family of the Dalai Lama, seated in balconies overlooking the



## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

main gate of the Great Temple. After a parade and mock battle on the part of the feudal infantry, the feudal cavalry rode past. The whips of authority were thrown down on the ground by the monks who had been exercising temporary control of the city and were taken up by the servants of the City Magistrates. Monks with trumpets, cymbals and drums filed out of the Temple and took up position round the outer court. Celebrants carrying censers, butter-lamps and jars of holy water occupied the centre and engaged in prayer. Tall banners were set up in the street and effigies of the evil spirits which were to be expelled from the city were brought out. Finally the Nechung Oracle rushed forth. He danced, staggering and swaying, brandishing a dagger in either hand, and suddenly collapsed. With the help of attendants he rose and made another tottering dash forward. As he came near it could be seen that he was indeed possessed; his face deathly pale and set in the vacancy of a trance. He collapsed again, and again leapt up for another blind tottering rush. The crowd surged round him and he disappeared in the wake of a procession of figures in skull masks, black-hat dancers and men carrying banners. At the city gate the effigies of evil spirits were set alight to the accompaniment of volleys of shots. The Oracle, exhausted and unconscious, was carried back to the Temple.

It has been mentioned that the Dalai Lama is fond of birds and that our list of gifts included two pairs of budgerigars. We thought that the birds, having survived the winter journey from India, deserved rest and warmth and we hoped that, if they remained for a time in the careful charge of Mr. Fox, the Mission Wireless Operator (well-known to wireless amateurs in almost every country as AC4YN), who is an expert on budgerigars, they would breed. They were not therefore produced for presentation on the morning of February 23rd. Two days later there came a messenger from the Potala to request immediate delivery of the birds; then two more messengers, more senior than the last; and then two more. It was soon clear that, if there were to be a battle of wills, the Dalai Lama would prove that his will was the stronger; so it was decided that compliance was the only possible course and Pemba Tsering, Rai Bahadur Norbhu's Head Clerk, was despatched to the Potala with the birds. It was well that he was sent, for yet other messengers were on the way, and on



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

arrival at the Potala a high dignitary of the Church was in readiness. Pemba, considerably overcome, handed over the birds and tried to make himself scarce, but he was sent for by the Dalai Lama who, talking Tibetan clearly and easily, discussed the birds' food and how to keep them safe. Pemba then noticed that the watch, nightingale clock and musical box, which we had presented, were all on the Dalai Lama's table and he was told that the Dalai Lama, when off duty, would hardly let them out of his sight. There was evidence of the Dalai Lama's real kindness to animals when a few days later, being persuaded that they might be better off for the time being in Mr. Fox's kindly care, he sent the budgerigars back to De Kyi Lingka where they became great favourites with visitors. Not all children are so thoughtful. Not all are so greatly loving and so greatly loved.

Some days later, grown-ups still being busy with ceremonies, we gave a children's party. Amongst the first to arrive was the family of the Dalai Lama. Kanwal Krishna had recently finished a half-length portrait of the Dalai Lama in oils. The eight-year-old monk brother noticed it immediately and, if he is always as openly affectionate to the Dalai Lama as he was to the picture, he must be very fond of him indeed. At lunch, served on low tables in front of broad flat cushions, all present tackled strange English foods with strange implements and good appetites. Then downstairs for a cinema show, at which the King and Queen's tour in Canada and the United States and some shots of Balmoral Castle and the Gardens were favourites, followed in close competition by Charlie Chaplin, Mickey Mouse, Do you like Monkeys?, and 'Kodachrome' scenes of Sikkim, Tibet and Bhutan. Then tea with more strange foods faithfully dealt with, crackers and balloons; and finally a Christmas tree presided over by two Father Christmases whose native language proved to be Tibetan and who knew all the children. But all the time the Dalai Lama's brothers and sister-in-law had been saving up crackers and balloons and toys for the Dalai Lama and they went off happy with a parcel of things in the uses of which they soon instructed him.

There is no doubt that the Dalai Lama has savoir faire. His knack of doing the right thing at the right time has been noted. A week after full moon there was a parade at the Potala of



## LHASA: THE FOURTEENTH DALAI LAMA

Collectors of Revenue (ranged in order according to the proportions of their realizations and the smallness of their outstandings during the previous year), and of those who had been responsible for the effigies of butter in the Temple square, ranged in six classes according to the merit of their exhibits as judged by the Regent. Next after the exhibit of the Tibetan Government, who are frequent winners, the chief prize had been awarded to the Punch and Judy exhibit of the Gya-me monastery—a sort of All Souls, where five hundred prize students from the Sera, Drepung and Gaden monasteries receive post-graduate education. The Collectors of Revenue were received by the Dalai Lama with due solemnity, and those who had provided fun with slaps on the back—which delighted them greatly.

It was anticipated that the child might soon weary of the confined space and restrictions of the Potala and wish to return to the Norbhu Lingka. Such a wish might well have been encouraged by his mother who, while resolute and successful in her endeavour to keep in touch with the Dalai Lama, cannot be permitted to sleep in the Potala and occupies a building outside the northern gate. And there were those who feared for the health and happiness of a young boy in the dark and cold monastic halls of the Potala and for his safety on its precipitous heights. But the Dalai Lama appears to love the Potala and especially what is generally considered to be an undesirable room, facing north, dark and cold—the favourite place of meditation of the 'Great Fifth' Dalai Lama.



## XVII

### *Tibet*

1940-45

MEANWHILE at intervals I had been sending to the Government of India two sets of news telegrams, one for general release and the other for *The Times*. The story of the presentation of the toys at the Norbhu Lingka provoked a Fourth Article in *The Times* which ended 'Most little boys have to pretend to be something more glorious than they really are. It is pleasant to fancy this one in Tibet happily pretending to be a little boy.' Whether in years to come my reports will hold the field as authentic evidence, I do not know.

Early in 1936 I had had the good fortune to meet Sir Eric Teichman, a most distinguished veteran of the China Consular service. He told me that in his experience the Chinese were a very truthful people—according to their ideas of truth. If, for instance, a battle was impending between government troops and one of the war-lords who then infested China, the commander on the government side would set to work to bribe the followers of the war-lord to desert and to join the government side. If he succeeded in this, an actual battle became as unnecessary as the use of live ammunition on a field-day. But a General must be a man who wins battles; battles involve casualties; and, to lend corroborative detail to despatches which might otherwise be bald and unconvincing, the successful general would send in a detailed account of supposed casualties and of money drawn to meet the expense of giving honourable burial to his dead. In fact Chinese history in the making, so far from being bunk, was often a recital of what might reasonably be deemed to have happened.

Reports from several sources indicated that the Chinese representative had been dissatisfied with the position accorded to him at the Installation ceremony and it was perhaps for this reason that he did not visit the Potala on the occasion of the presentation of



gifts from China. But, from the point of view of future historians, the position was easily adjustable. A newspaper of which I knew nothing urged me to send it separate reports. I was obliged to refuse because two sets of messages would be as much as could conveniently be transmitted. In the end I agreed to send a telegram announcing the bare fact that the Installation had taken place. When a copy of the paper arrived, I found in it a column which began with the statement that I had reported that the Installation had taken place on a certain date. It then went on, without any indication that the words were not mine, to give an account, as detailed as it was inaccurate, of the ceremony as it might no doubt have been conducted if the Chinese representative in Lhasa had been the chief actor in the scene.

Towards the end of the last chapter I mentioned a portrait of the Dalai Lama by Kanwal Krishna. Arriving in Lhasa ahead of me, he found a ready welcome and soon established himself as a sort of official artist for the occasion of the Installation. In the gallery of portraits and scenes of which I am the lucky owner what I like best are the authenticity of his detail and the fact that he seems to have seen men and women—the Dalai Lama's family, the Chief Oracle and many others—as I remember them. I have before me his portrait of the Dalai Lama in the ordinary robes of a monk. Wherever I may be in the room, the eyes of the child are on me, just as they were on every person who attended the audience at the De Kyi Lingka.

Like their predecessors Doc Morgan and Dr. Bo, Harry Staunton and Dr. Tonyot were welcome in every home and many monks attended our little primitive hospital. One day, in the course of an interview at the Great Temple, the Tibetan Cabinet asked whether we would like them to build us a hospital. Next day their young Officer of Works came along and saw the trace for a four-roomed single-storey building which we had marked out on the ground. He paced out the trace and said it must be larger. Otherwise it would not be possible to work to standard dimensions and materials. So he paced out the ground-plan of the building as he thought it should be. That completed his work as an architect. Tibetans build houses as, not so long ago, seaworthy vessels were being built at fishing ports in England. Within three and a half months the hospital was complete and full of patients.



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

A member of high society was a lady, connected by birth with two previous Dalai Lamas, who lived on her estate a mile off. In 1904 it had been the headquarters of the Younghusband Expedition to Lhasa. One of the events of the Lhasa season was an annual luncheon party which she gave to the Cabinet and other high officials. Her hospitality was so urgent that often the fate of at least a few of her guests was 'Where I dines I sleeps.' She had a fund of jokes and stories which were reputed to be broad. I doubt whether even in England men and women live on such natural and easy terms as in Tibet.

Lhasa called to mind the words of the philosopher who held that a city should not be too large to be served by a single herald and that its citizens should be self-sufficient and should dwell within sight of one another. Over the little town towered the acropolis of the Potala. The mystery was how the great pile, built by different hands at different epochs, crowned by the tombs—roofed with solid beaten gold—of successive Dalai Lamas, could be at once so masterful and so intimate and so much at unity with itself.

A great character of whom we saw much, both as host and as guest and at parties, was Tsarong. A man with no great advantage of birth, he had been the young favourite of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and had displayed valour in covering the flight of his master from the Chinese towards India in 1910. The Dalai Lama had bidden him marry a lady of birth and property, the only representative of her family still living. In accordance with Tibetan usage, he had adopted the name of her family and had in course of time become a member of the Cabinet and Commander-in-Chief. After resigning those offices, he had continued to be a man of great influence. Modern in his outlook, he had built roads and the one iron bridge near Lhasa. The materials had been carried up piece by piece from India by gangs of porters or on the backs of mules and yaks. In his house I was a guest at the family celebration of the great festival of the Tibetan New Year. Once, after a long and festive party at the De Kyi Lingka, he fell asleep in my arms murmuring, "Great Minister, I love you, I love you." At breakfast next morning he had his usual bright eye and was quite unperturbed. He spoke a little English. To him it seemed strange that anybody in India should not welcome British rule.



## TIBET

Of the four boys who had been at school at Rugby, one had died when serving with an Indian battalion in the First War. Mondo was a monk official and Kyipup a civil official, both of middle rank. The one of whom we saw most was the youngest, Ringang. As District Magistrate of a distant part of Tibet (where his wife sometimes discharged his duties), engineer of the mint and of the hydro-electric installation and interpreter to the Cabinet, he had his hands full. Rugby had treated the boys well and they were grateful. Ringang had first married a wife of great quality and charm, but the children did not thrive; so she suggested that he should also marry her sister. The arrangement appeared to be a great success. Mrs. R. senior was a welcoming and charming hostess in Lhasa. Her sister was busy and happy, bringing up a fine family on an estate in the country.

For the upper classes in Lhasa long-drawn-out luncheon parties took the place of the daily newspaper and the official gazette. In the streets of the Holy City reputations were made and marred by popular songs which seemed to catch on within a few hours of some event.

For Tibet, the early years of the war passed happily. The price of wool, the chief export of the country, soared. Cotton cloth and other foreign goods became increasingly difficult to obtain, but silver was cheap and more and more caravans of mules bearing bars of silver set out from Kalimpong and Gangtok for Gyantse, Shigatse and Lhasa. Then came the entry of Japan into the war and her tremendous early successes.

Since 1931 Japan had been engaged in an attempt to dominate China by force. The British Government now found it necessary to give all possible support to the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai Shek, which had its headquarters at Chungking. This involved the despatch of essential supplies—even if the quantity could only be very small—from India to China via Tibet.

The Tibetan Government could not be expected to welcome such a project. They would have liked to keep clear of the war entirely. They foresaw a scarcity of transport for the carriage of trade goods and would have preferred that there should be as little coming and going as possible between Tibet and China.

Hugh Richardson had left Lhasa and was now Secretary at the British Embassy, Chungking. His place had been taken by Rai



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

Bahadur Norbhu. Norbhu, brought up in the straight-minded school of Bell, had never in the course of more than a third of a century of service attempted to persuade Tibetans to believe anything of which he was not himself convinced. Perhaps it was for this reason that he failed to make headway in Lhasa over what came to be called 'Trans-Tibet Transport'. It was therefore decided to invite Frank Ludlow to take charge of the Mission in Lhasa.

In 1926 Ludlow had had before him a fine career in the Indian Educational Service. But he had his own philosophy of life and, when the Tibetan Government suggested that a small school to be run on English lines should be opened at Gyantse, he had dedicated himself to that work. Opposition on the part of the Tibetan Church to the introduction of Western education had resulted in the school being closed after two years. From then on he had lived the good life, giving scope to his love of Kashmir and the Himalayas and studying their botany and birds. His old pupils and their parents had not forgotten him.

Under his advice, the Tibetan Government agreed to Trans-Tibet Transport in respect of goods other than the actual weapons of war. At that time George Sherriff was busy in northern Assam pointing sky-wards, for the ostensible purpose of dealing with Japanese aircraft, guns which might be expected to burst if fired at a high angle. Both as friends and as botanists, he and Ludlow had long been in close contact and the Government of India readily agreed that he should be invited to look after Trans-Tibet Transport and Tibetan trade matters at the Kalimpong end. The botanical work of Frank Ludlow and of George and Betty Sherriff in Tibet and Bhutan is known to garden-lovers all over the world.

I do wish some eminent botanist would write a book on elementary botany that I could understand; because botany must be such a splendid subject and its jargon is so formidable. The way I would set about the business, if I had the knowledge, would be to take a dozen plants or parts of plants, and to deal with each on one page in simple language, and on the facing page in jargon. Thus one would soon pick up the jargon. If Tibetan can be simplified, so also perhaps could botany. At Oxford, greatly daring, for I was only an undergraduate, I attended a course of post-graduate lectures on geography by the future Sir Halford Mackinder. One day he came into the room wearing a hat which looked very odd on



## TIBET

his head. He said he was just back from Switzerland and had accidentally swapped hats in the train. There were in Europe races some of which had long, some medium, and some short heads. "That, gentlemen," he said, "in terms of cranial indices, is the criterion of the differentiae which distinguish the dolichocephaloid, the mesocephaloid and the brachycephaloid types." In much the same way Ernest Barker, in a special cram course for men who would be taking the Home, Civil and I.C.S. exam., vied with his master Aristotle in expressing big ideas in a few short, sharp, simple words.

In the summer of 1944, when I was on the way to Lhasa for what was likely to be a last visit, I had a breakdown which kept me at Gyantse for three weeks. This was a good opportunity for getting ahead with a further check of the Word Book series. The last part of the journey was done in the good company of Arch Steele, the American correspondent. The welcome to Lhasa was warm. Any visit to Lhasa might be held to justify a book; but I must be brief.

At the British Mission, Frank Ludlow had been succeeded by George Sherriff. He and his wife Betty, daughter of Dr. Graham, had doubled the size of the little garden at De Kyi Lingka and had created a scene which could not have failed to earn a gold medal at a Chelsea Flower Show. I shall not attempt to describe it because surely they must be going to give us a book. James Guthrie had succeeded Doc Staunton.

The Dalai Lama was now nine years old, or ten by Tibetan reckoning. The striking child I had known four years before was growing into a fine boy. Somehow his noble mother had managed to keep close to him. His tutors found him a ready learner. His touch with his people had been growing closer year by year.

The Incarnation Lama of the Reting monastery who had been Regent at the time of my second visit in 1940 had been succeeded by an older man. The one aim of the Tibetan Government was to keep the ship of state going steadily on an even keel until the Dalai Lama should come of age. For me this visit was mainly an occasion of renewing contacts. Many old friends, notably Ringang and his wife, and Kheme Se, who had taken part in the discovery of the Dalai Lama, gave generous help over language work.

One day the Dalai Lama's father—now a Duke endowed with



## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

estates and much interested in horses—came to lunch. My head groom arrived weeping. He said my favourite pony had stricture. It was cast and swelling up and would soon die. The Duke calmly told me not to worry. He would send for his vet and all would soon be well. An hour later the vet, who was a Central Asia man, came along and produced a pair of tweezers. Going up to the pony, he put the tweezers up one of the nostrils, gave a tweak—and the waters flowed. My guess was that, by producing a sudden twinge of pain near the brain, he made the pony forget himself. An hour later he was perfectly fit and I was soon riding him again.

At lunch with the Chief Oracle in his little monastery near Drepung conversation turned to the subject of religious wars and persecution. My host seemed puzzled. "Surely," he said, "different men may travel by different roads and yet arrive at the same destination."

During the interval since my second visit to Lhasa in 1940 Rani Chuni Dorji and Chang-lo Chen Kung had undertaken a labour of pious love and had translated into Tibetan my account of the Discovery and Installation of the Dalai Lama. I had brought the Tibetan version with me and submitted it to the Lord Chamberlain. One day there was some uneasiness in Lhasa. It had become known that on the previous day the Cabinet had been in practically continuous session from midday until far on into the night. Actually they had been going through the translation word by word. They had pasted in a few small corrections. They informed me that, apart from these, one or more of them could vouch from his own knowledge for the accuracy of every word.

Permission having been obtained for the account to be printed at the Potala Press, the text was first written out in uncial script on long narrow slips of transparent rice paper. It was then pasted, in reverse, onto long hardwood boards, on which skilled men carved out the letters with graving tools. These boards were then delivered to me at De Kyi Lingka and printed off at a great pace by pressing sheets of Tibetan paper down on the boards with rollers. This is a very strong beige-coloured paper, insect-proof because it consists largely of daphne bark, which is made in Bhutan and Nepal for the Tibetan market. Another copy on thin white paper was written by the best scribe in Lhasa.

I had interesting talks with my Chinese colleague, Dr. Tsung-



## TIBET

lien Shen. In the spring of 1944 he had proved to be a most courteous and interesting guest at the Sikkim Residency and had presented to me a large signed portrait of Chiang Kai Shek. He came out to meet me when I was nearing Lhasa and we had many talks. Educated at Harvard and at the Sorbonne and afterwards a professor of history at universities in China, he was a patriot, but a patriot with wide views. As 'Resident Minister of the Chinese National Government in Tibet'—a title which the Tibetans were not disposed to concede—he was unable to think of Tibet except as one of 'the Five Nations of China' and he considered that on historical grounds China's claims to Tibet were strong. But he seemed to think of the China of the future as an empire in which the Tibetans, as subjects of China, would enjoy a large degree of liberty to live, and to worship God, in their own way. He realized that Tibet could never prosper unless relations between its rulers and India were good; and he seemed to look to a future in which China and India would be linked in friendship. 'Tibet and the Tibetans' by Shen and his assistant Shen-shi Liu was published almost simultaneously with Heinrich Harrer's 'Seven Years in Tibet.' Having had contact with Tibet less continuously, but over a longer period, than the authors of these two books, I do not know which I like best, or which is the more true to fact in its description of the people and the country.

On a round of farewell visits I took with me gifts in the form of copies of the Tibetan version of the Discovery and Installation of the Dalai Lama, wrapped in golden brocade. The recipient would rise, lift the book to his forehead and reverently place it on the family altar. I also presented sets of the records of Tibetan music made by us at De Kyi Lingka and manufactured by the Gramophone Company, Calcutta. These parting presents eclipsed any that I had ever given before.

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## THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

*Om mani padme hum*

OM, The Jewel in the Lotus, HUM

Marco Pallis in his 'Peaks and Lamas' gives some idea of the many trains of thought which these words may evoke. He suggests that in the final *Hum* there is a sense of challenge. Now that the Tibetans had found their Precious Jewel, how would they keep it safe? Providence will decide.

In the middle of December, 1944, I left Lhasa for the last time and reached Gangtok a fortnight later. In August, 1945, on what happened to be V.J. Day, the end of the war with Japan, I handed over charge to Arthur Hopkinson, an old friend of Tibet. In Delhi, on the way home, I was the guest of Lord Wavell. Those who have enjoyed his 'Other Men's Flowers' will remember that it was his habit, even when he was hard pressed, to think a matter out, make up his mind, and then turn his thoughts to other things. I had been with him both at Summer Fields and in College at Winchester. He would often call up memories of those days and of old friends.

I had two years' deferred leave due to me. So actually I was a member of the I.C.S. for nearly forty years and was still in service when India and Pakistan became independent. Would I like to live those years over again? Certainly, provided that the experience of each day would be something new, 'What's to come is still unsure.' That is the essence of enjoyment. 'Songs unheard are sweetest.' No man can twice, for the first time, catch sight of Meshed or of Lhasa, watch rosy-fingered dawn touch the summits of Kanchenjunga, see the rays of the setting sun as they gild the coronet of hills which hems the Vale of Peshawar, or breathe the cold, tart air of a Punjab cold-weather morning. But most of all I would like to be able to look fifty years ahead and to see the countries in which I have lived bearing steadfastly what Sir Ernest Barker so fitly calls 'the vast orb of their fate'.

In the autumn of 1950 the Chinese communist government invaded Tibet. In midwinter the Dalai Lama, now nominally the head of the Tibetan Government, following the example set by his predecessor forty years before, fled to the Chumbi Valley. He



## TIBET

returned to Lhasa in the following summer and in 1954 he visited Peking. What the future may hold in store for Tibet and for the line of the Dalai Lamas it would be idle to guess. The Tibet of yesterday, in which many men of many nations found so much to admire and to love, had since the time of Desideri known long periods of Chinese domination, but had not lost its essential character. For many hundreds of years Tibetans have lived in an atmosphere of thought which has taken little account of time and of temporal afflictions. A real live Tibet could never have been perpetuated by making it a museum-piece guaranteed by the Powers. The Tibetans have minds which are too alert to be suited by such a position.

'The Government of India is near to us and has a large army. The Government of China also has a large army. We should therefore maintain firm friendship with these two; both are powerful.' These words occur in the Political Testament which the Thirteenth Dalai Lama drew up a year before his death.

'If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars.' Let us leave it at that.

Good luck to Tibet and the Tibetans. God bless them.

After '*Om mani padme hum*', the most familiar phrase on the lips of Tibetans is '*Tashi de le*'. So, to all friends wherever they may be,

*Tashi de le phun tsum tso*  
*Dewa tentu thoppar sho*

Happy and peaceful be your lot;  
Success be yours in all your endeavours!







# INDEX OF PERSONS AND PLACES

*Figures in italics refer to maps*

- Abazai, 34, 36-7, 41-2  
 Abdul Ghafar, 115  
 Abdur Rahman, Amir, 33  
 Afghanistan, 3, 33, 50, 61, 72, 91-107, 111, 127, 156  
 Agnew, P. D., 3  
 Akbar Shah, Mian, 35-6  
 Allnutt, Canon S. S., 55-6  
 Allum, F. W., 85  
 Amanulla, King, 72, 94, 97-103, 105, 115, 141  
 Ambeyla, 124, 123  
 Amo Chu, 18, 19, 183, 196  
 Amps, Lionel, 94, 96, 100  
 Andrews, C. F., 56  
 Annandale, Dr. T. N., 71  
 Anson, Frank and Maud, 33, 39  
 Anstey, Brigadier E. C., 151, 154  
 Aornos, Mount, 124, 127  
 Arawali, 108, 117, 120-1  
 Attock, 34, 35-6
- Bacha Saqao, 101-2, 104-5, 141  
 Bacon, Roger, 129  
 Badama, 108, 117-18  
 Bagh, 121  
 Bailey, F. M., 74, 194, 203  
 Baloo, 52-3  
 Baluchistan, 60, 92, 3, 57, 59, 81-2, 87, 134, 148, 150-66  
 Bannu, 92, 132, 33, 110, 133-5, 137-8, 147-8  
 Bara River, 34, 108, 110, 121  
 Barker, Sir Ernest, 239, 242  
 Barlow, C. B. ('Bill') and Helen, 118, 120  
 Baroda, Gaekwar of, 2, 14
- Bartlett, L. A., 21-2, 26  
 'Beachcomber', 199  
 Beaty, F. M., 159  
 Bell, Sir Charles, 19, 24, 27, 31-2, 167-8, 174, 193, 202-4, 207, 238  
 Bernard, Theos, 202  
 Best, Duncan, 94  
 Betham, Geoffrey and Dorothy, 142  
 Bhondong Shappe, 212  
 Bhopal, 2, 28  
 Bhutan, 2, 18, 3, 13, 19, 31, 167-169, 176-7, 183-91, 192-7, 232  
 'Bigglebai' (S. H. Bigsby), 42  
 Bim Bahadur, 175, 180, 197  
 Birjand, 2, 60, 61, 64-6, 69-71, 73-4, 81-2, 84-5, 88  
 Birkenhead, Lord, 79  
 Blacker, L. V. S., 74  
 Blake, G. A., 45-7  
 Bo Tsering, Dr., 204-5, 235  
 Bolan Pass, 60, 164  
 Bolton, Norman, 33, 38, 40, 43, 93, 107  
 Bolton, Ethel, 38, 107  
 Bor, B. N., 197  
 Borasjun, 2, 87  
 Brahmaputra, 2, 18, 20, 183, 196  
 Bray, D. de S. and Cis, 81  
 Brenan, T. V., 66  
 Buck, Edward, 8, 10, 15, 16, 81  
 Bull, Geoffrey, 203  
 Bumthang, 18, 184, 187, 189  
 Burt, Major, 75  
 Bushire, 2, 87



# INDEX

- Butler, Mr. Harcourt, 6, 8  
 Bux, Mr., 159
- Caesar, Mr., 29  
 Calcutta, 5, 7, 8, 15, 17, 31, 136,  
 171, 177, 184, 192  
 Caroe, Olaf, 167  
 Carter, Harold, 94-5  
 Cassels, Sir Robert, 143  
 Cater, Norman, 77, 107, 148, 160,  
 164  
 Cates, K. Hyde and Joan, 117-18  
 Cavagnari, Sir Louis, 93  
 Central India, 2, 3, 4, 11  
 Chakdara, 34, 124, 123, 125,  
 128-9  
 Chaman, 60, 98, 150, 157  
 Chamberlain, Sir Austen, 51  
 Chang-lo Chen, 200, 240  
 Chaplin, Charlie, 189, 206-7, 232  
 Chapman, F. Spencer, 203-4, 206  
 Charasiah, 108, 95-6  
 Charikar, 96-7  
 Charsadda, 34, 108, 36-45, 112,  
 117, 123  
 Chelmsford, Lord, 48-51, 56-7,  
 77  
 Chiang Kai Shek, 237, 241  
 Chihil Dukhtaran (Forty Virgins'  
 Range), 60, 63, 87  
 Chikyab Khenpo, 218-19, 224-6,  
 228, 240  
 Chitral, and Mehtar of, 124, 12,  
 33, 110, 123, 126, 129, 130, 147  
 Chope, Brigadier A. J. H., 165  
 Chopra, Sir R. N., 171-2  
 Chumbi Valley, 18, 22, 171, 184-  
 185, 195, 204, 242  
 Chung Yin, General, 25  
 Churchill, Lieut. Winston  
 Spencer, 128  
 Clark, Leonard, 203  
 Clarke, E. H. S., 9
- Clutterbuck, Sir Peter, 196  
 Cooch Bihar, 18, 184  
 Curtis, Gerald, 163  
 Curzon, Lord, 6, 7, 11, 12, 33  
 Cutting, Suydam, 202
- Dacca, 34, 93  
 Dagg, S. J., 204  
 Dalai Lama, 5th, 233  
 13th, 19, 21, 23, 24, 27, 30-2,  
 193, 202-3, 205, 207, 209-  
 211, 213-17, 243  
 14th, 209-33, 235, 239, 241-  
 242  
 Dalbandin, 60, 61  
 Dale, Brigadier G. A., 66, 68, 70,  
 72  
 Daly, Sir Hugh, 4  
 Dane, Sir Louis, 5  
 Darjeeling, 18, 17, 168, 184, 194-6  
 Darley, C. C., 117-19  
 Dar ul Aman, 108, 96  
 Dasht i Lut, 60, 65  
 Datta Khel, 132, 133, 134, 141-2,  
 148  
 David, Dr. A. A., 29  
 Davis, Col. Newnhan, 6  
 Dawson, Victor, 13, 15  
 Deane, Sir Harold, 93  
 Dehra Dun, 2, 179, 197  
 Delhi, 9-12, 15, 16, 52-6, 77, 167,  
 177, 192, 201, 242  
 Densapa, Rai Bahadur, 181  
 Dera Ismail Khan, 60, 92, 132, 33,  
 133-6, 155  
 Desideri, Ippolito, 202, 242  
 Diaper, Alf, 79  
 Dickson, Brigadier W. E. R., 70,  
 72-6  
 Dikchu, 18, 174  
 Dingja, Kusho, 209  
 Dir, and Nawab of, 124, 123, 126,  
 128-9, 130-1



# INDEX

- Diwangiri, 18, 184  
 Do-aba, 34, 36-7, 40  
 Dobbs, Sir Henry, 77  
 Dochen, 18, 25  
 Dodd, Percy, 94, 97  
 Dolan, Brooke, 176  
 Dooars, 18, 184  
 Dorji, Jigme, 177  
     Raja, S. T., 170, 184, 194-7  
     Rani Chuni, 170, 200, 240  
 Dudley, Cecil, 180  
 Duke, A. A. G., 135, 143  
 Duncan, Marion, 203  
 Dunsterville, General, 40, 61  
 Durand, Edward, 11  
 Durand, Sir Mortimer, and  
     Durand Line, 33, 93, 110, 133-4,  
     141  
 Duzdap (Zahidan), 60, 61-2, 72,  
     75, 80-2, 85-90  
 Dyer, Brigadier R. E. H., 59  
  
 Eden, Ashley, 184  
 Edward VII, King, 4, 11  
 Edwardes, Herbert, 110  
 Ekvall, Robert, 203  
 Etherton, P. T., 74  
 Everest, Mount, 18, 145, 170-1,  
     174, 207-8  
  
 Fairservice, Gavin and Ruth, 180  
 Faletti, John, 10  
 Feit, Marcel, 97  
 Fife, William, 79  
 Finlay, R. F., 45  
 Fischer, C. E. C., 197  
 Forrest, George, 185, 197  
 Fort Sandeman, 60, 92, 132, 134,  
     150, 152  
 Fox, R. N., 231-2  
 Francis, H. L., 151, 164-5  
 Fraser-Tytler, Kerr and Eila, 93,  
     99  
  
 Gandhi, Mahatma, 56, 175  
 Gangtok, 18, 19, 169, 170, 174-5,  
     178, 180, 184, 193-6, 206, 237,  
     242  
 Gaud i Zirreh, 60, 90  
 Gayer, Betty, 118  
 George V, King, 9-16, 30-1, 206,  
     223  
 George VI, King, 232  
 Ghazni, 33  
 Gherai, E., 203  
 Ghulam Sadiq, 97  
 Giri River, 57  
 Gongkar, Kusho, 28-9  
 Gould, Dick and Bob, 81-2, 90,  
     94, 102-3, 107, 177, 200  
 Gould, E., 28  
 Gould, Lorraine, 80-1, 84, 94,  
     97-9, 101, 104, 107, 113, 115,  
     125-6, 136-7, 154, 164  
 Graham, Dr. and Mrs., 19, 169,  
     170, 177  
 Graham-Bower, Ursula, 177  
 Grant, A. H., 21  
 Grey, Sir Edward, 32  
 Grey, Col. W. G., 66, 68  
 Griffith, R. E. H., 40, 131, 133,  
     143, 145-7, 149  
 Grindrod, J., 19  
 Grylls, W. M. and Connie,  
     118  
 Gumal River, 92, 132, 142  
 Gunther, John, 176  
 Gurdaspur, 2, 3  
 Guthrie, James, 239  
 Gyantse, 18, 17-26, 74, 76, 202-4,  
     206, 209, 237-9  
  
 Ha, 18, 184, 187, 194-6  
 Habibullah, Amir, 72, 94  
 Hailey, Peter, 142  
 Hall, Melvin and Josephine, 88  
 Hamun, 60, 63-5, 73, 90



# INDEX

- Hardinge of Penshurst, Lord, 8, 9, 12-14, 16, 50  
 Hardwar, 2, 8  
 Hardy, H. H., 29  
 Harrer, Heinrich, 198, 200, 202, 241  
 Harris, Audrey, 177  
 Harris, Wyn, 170  
 Hazara District, 92, 33, 127  
 Heath, L. M., 76-8, 83  
 Heckstall-Smith, Brooke, 79  
 Helmand River, 2, 60, 63  
 Hendricks, W. St. A., 171-2  
 Herat, 2, 60, 69  
 Heron, Davis, 64-5, 72, 83  
 Hewett, Sir John, 9  
 Hindu Kush, 2, 124, 101, 130  
 Hirtzel, Sir Arthur, 29  
 Hisam ud Dauleh, 82  
 Hogg, H. W., 165  
 Holland, Henry, 151, 160-3  
 Holland, Lady, 161, 163  
 Hopkinson, Arthur, 242  
 Hora, Dr. S. L., 196  
 Hotz, Miss, 81  
 Howard, Sir Albert, 4, 157  
 Howard-Bury, C. K., 77  
 Huang Mu Sung, General, 205  
 Humphrys, Sir Francis, 93-109, 141  
 Humphrys, Lady, 93, 96, 98, 103  
 Hurst, George, 48  
 Hyderabad, Nizam of, 2, 14  
 Inayatulla, King, 105  
 Indore, 2, 3, 28  
 Indus, River, 2, 34, 60, 92, 33, 35, 57, 127, 155, 160  
 Ipi, Faqir of, 132, 147  
 Irvine, Col. T. W., 45-6, 48  
 Irving, R. L. G., 208  
 Irwin, Lord, 115, 136  
 Jaipur, and Maharaja of, 2, 12, 107  
 Jalalabad, 92, 108, 33, 93, 101  
 Jali, Faqir Chand, 175, 180  
 Jamiat Rai, Diwan, 159, 165  
 Jandola, 132, 133, 135, 144  
 Jelap La, 18, 19, 168, 175  
 Jelf, Arthur, 4, 6  
 Johnson, Amy, 207  
 Johnson, H. H., 135, 137-8, 140, 143, 148-9  
 Joseph, H. W. B., 27  
 Jumna River, 16, 53-4  
 Juzak, 60, 61-3, 81  
 Kabul, 2, 92, 108, 33, 91-107, 109, 141-2, 148, 185  
 Kabul River, 34, 92, 108, 35-6, 41, 48, 95, 121, 130  
 Kain, 60, 66, 69  
 Kainat, 60, 64-6, 81-4, 87  
 Kaisora River, 132, 138, 144  
 Kalimpong, 18, 17, 19, 169, 175, 177, 180, 184, 237-8  
 Kanchenjunga, 18, 168-9, 174, 208, 242  
 Kandahar, 2, 60, 33, 98, 103, 157  
 Kaniguram, 132, 133  
 Kanwal Krishna, 232, 235  
 Karachi, 2, 60, 90, 98, 150, 155  
 Karakoram, 2, 130  
 Karslake, Major-General H., 165  
 Kasauli, 151  
 Kashmir, 2, 92, 124, 91, 98, 126-7, 130, 194-5, 201, 238  
 Kaulback, Ronald, 203  
 Kebbell, Mary, 80  
 Keele, Granville, 79, 80  
 Kelat, Khan of, 60, 164  
 Kemp, Dr. S. W., 71  
 Kennaway, Fred, 3  
 Khajuri Plain, 34, 122  
 Khanai, 45, 47-8  
 Khangmar, 18, 24  
 Kheme Se, 209, 214, 227, 239



# INDEX

- Khojak Pass, 60, 98  
 Khost, 92, 108, 132, 94, 109, 116,  
     118, 147  
 Khyber Pass, 34, 92, 108, 93, 101,  
     110-11, 115-16  
 Kingdon-Ward, F., 185, 197  
 Kirkbride, George, 94  
 Kirman, 2, 63, 87  
 Kitchener, Lord, 5-7, 81  
 Knight, E. F., 130  
 Koh Malik Siah, 60, 61, 63, 65,  
     81  
 Kohat, 34, 92, 108, 33, 48, 109-10,  
     117, 135, 148  
 Kreyer, J. A. C., 66-7  
 Kuli Khan, 39, 40  
 Kumbum, 211, 214  
 Kurram, 92, 108, 132, 109-22,  
     123, 133, 135, 139, 140, 145, 148,  
     194  
 Kyi Chu River, 18, 201, 205,  
     217  
 Kyipup, Kusho, 28, 230, 237  
 Kyitsang Trulku, 211-14, 218-  
     219  
  
 Lachen and Lachung, 18, 174  
 Laden La, 23, 25-7, 30  
 Laithwaite, Gilbert, 176  
 Lallow, Clare, 79  
 Lang, Lionel, 69, 76  
 Lhasa, 2, 18, 19-25, 74, 171, 192,  
     199, 200, 201-43  
 Liaqat Ali Khan, 175  
 Linlithgow, Lord and Lady, 175-  
     176  
 Lloyd George, David, 50-1  
 Loralai, 60, 150, 152  
 Lowari Pass, 124, 123, 129, 130  
 Ludlow, Frank, 185, 196, 238-9  
 Luishar, Kusho, 212  
 Lungshar, Kusho, 27-30  
 Lytton, Lord, 11  
 McCarthy, E. D., 77  
 Macdonald, David, 17, 19, 20, 204  
 Macdonald, Lady (Claude), 80  
 MacGregor, Robert, 19, 83  
 Mackinder, Sir Halford, 238  
 McLaren, Archie, 118  
 McMahon, Sir Henry, 8-11, 13,  
     15, 31  
 Maconachie, Roy, 109, 111  
 Maffey, John, 49-52, 55-8  
 Mahbub Ali, Sheikh, 47, 94, 105  
 Mahmud Shah, 93  
 Mahomed Wali, Sardar, 99, 101-  
     102, 114-15  
 Maillart, Ella, 176  
 Malakand, 34, 92, 124, 123-31,  
     145, 194  
 Malhotra, R., 196  
 Malleon, Major-General Wilfrid,  
     61, 68-9  
 Mallory, G. H. L., 171, 208  
 Manas River, 18, 176, 183  
 Mardan, 34, 33-6, 48, 57  
 Martin, J., 19  
 Martin, F. B., 86  
 Mary, Queen, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16,  
     30, 206, 223  
 Matheson, Sir Torquhil, 150  
 Matta, 34, 41  
 Meerut, 2, 55  
 Mekran, 2, 60, 154-5  
 Meshed, 2, 60, 61, 64-70, 72, 74,  
     76, 85, 242  
 Metcalfe, Aubrey, 167, 176  
 Mhow, 2, 4  
 Migot, André, 203  
 Mills, Philip, 177  
 Millsaugh, Dr. A. C., 88-9  
 Minto, Lord, 4-8, 51  
 Mirali, 132, 133, 135, 138, 148  
 Miramshah, 132, 133-5  
 Mirjawa, 60, 61  
 Mondo, Kusho, 28, 237



# INDEX

- Monro, General, 54  
 Montagu, Mr. Edwin, 51, 55, 77,  
     79  
 Moore, George, 146  
 Morgan, W. S., 204-5, 235  
 Morley, Lord, 7, 23, 51  
 Morris, C. J., 170  
 Mulligan, Hugh, 151-4, 164-5  
 Murray, E. M., 64  
 Murree, 92, 47, 49, 143  
 Muscat, 2, 77  
 Mustafa Khan, 157  
  
 Nabha, Maharaja of, 13  
 Nadir Khan, 105, 141, 148  
 Nagchuka, 212-13, 218  
 Napier, Everard, 172  
 Narahari Rao, 193  
 Nathia Gali, 92, 39, 49, 131  
 Nathu La, 18, 168, 175, 179, 184  
 Neame, Philip, 135, 143, 203-4  
 Neh, 60, 61, 65, 75, 78, 86-7  
 Nepal, 2, 18, 3, 168, 173, 183, 201,  
     240  
 Nepean, E. Y., 204  
 Nimla, 92, 93  
 Nizampur, 34, 35-6  
 Noel, Edward, 111-13, 156  
 Norbhu, Rai Bahadur, 20, 204,  
     206, 219, 227, 231, 238  
 North, Miss, 172  
 North-West Frontier Province,  
     2, 92, 3, 17, 32, 33, 44, 110, 150  
 Nowshera, 34, 33, 35, 39, 44  
 Nushki, 60, 61-2, 64-5, 86  
 Nyang Chu, 18, 19, 20, 22  
  
 Oates, L. E. G., 4  
 O'Connor, W. F. T., 202, 206  
 Oracle, 202, 211, 213, 222, 229-  
     231, 235, 240  
  
 Pabbi, 34, 36  
  
 Packman, Kenneth, 135, 137-8,  
     140-1, 143, 149  
 Paghman, 92, 97, 102  
 Pallis, Marco, 204, 241  
 Panchen Lama (Tashi Lama), 24,  
     210, 223  
 Panjkora River, 34, 124, 123, 129  
 Paquet, Henri, 86  
 Parachinar, 92, 108, 109, 112, 114,  
     116  
 Paro Penlop, 18, 187-8  
 Parsons, A. E. B., 177  
 Pears, Sir Steuart, 116, 120-2, 130,  
     134-5, 146, 149  
 Peiwar Kotal, 108, 112, 115-18,  
     120-1  
 Pema Choden ('Kula'), 178, 180  
 Pemba Tsering, 231-2  
 Perry, Alice, 81  
 Persia, East, 18, 59-90  
 Peshawar, 34, 92, 32, 33-48, 93,  
     95, 107, 114-16, 120-3, 129,  
     167, 177  
 Peyton, Brigadier General W. E.,  
     14  
 Phari, 18, 19, 23, 25-7, 76, 171,  
     177, 186, 192, 196, 198  
 Pinnell, L. G., 179  
 Pishin, 60, 158  
 Pitcher, D. le G., 4  
 Pope, Major-General S. B., 135,  
     139, 142-5, 147-9  
 Prideaux, Col. F. B., 58, 63, 65,  
     68, 70, 81  
 Pulford, Violet, 98  
 Punjab, 3, 33, 87, 123, 181-2, 242  
 Puri, 2, 170  
  
 Quetta, 2, 60, 61, 78, 82, 98, 150-  
     161, 164-5  
  
 Raisman, Sir Jeremy, 192  
 Ratsey, Tom, 79



# INDEX

- Rawalpindi, 92, 3, 47, 49, 148  
 Razmak, 92, 132, 133-5, 138-9, 144, 146, 148  
 Regent of Tibet, 202, 206-7, 210-17, 219, 222-5, 228-30, 239  
 Reynolds, L. W., 9-11, 13, 14  
 Richardson, Hugh, 198, 203, 208, 237  
 Figya, 213  
 Ringang, Kusho, 212  
 Ringang, R. D. (Changopa), 28-29, 200, 230, 237, 239  
 Risalpur, 34, 35  
 Roberts, Lord, 30, 95, 115  
 Robertson, Sir G. S., 130  
 Roney-Dougal, A. R., 35  
 Roos-Keppel, Sir George, 38, 40, 41, 43, 49, 115, 131  
 Roosevelt, President, 176  
 Ross, E. Denison, 77  
 Rui Khaf, 60, 69  
 Rungpo, 18, 172-3, 175  
 Russell, Guy, 134, 143  
 Rutledge, Guy, 170-1  
  
 Safed Koh, 108, 109, 148  
 Saidu, 124, 123-5  
 Samsam ud Dowleh, 64, 82-3, 86  
 Sandeman, Sir Robert, 134, 150, 159, 164  
 Sarhad, 60, 59, 61  
 Sayce, Harry, 151, 154, 164-5  
 Schäfer, Ernst, 176  
 Scotland, A. G., 142  
 Scott, Honourable Mary, 180  
 Scott, W., 94, 104  
 Sebu La, 18, 168  
 Seistan, 2, 60, 58, 63-6, 70-7, 80-84, 87-90, 146  
 Shabkadar, 34, 36-7, 40-1  
 Sharp, Henry, 10  
 Shaukat ul Mulk, 82-4, 88  
 Sheikh Budin, 132, 134, 139  
 Shen-shi Liu, 202, 241  
 Sherrieff, George and Betty, 185, 188, 197, 238-9  
 Sherring, C. A., 203  
 Shigatse, 18, 20-1, 24, 209, 210  
 Shikarpur, 60, 160, 163  
 Shipton, Eric, 170  
 Shorrock, Guy, 80  
 Shuckburgh, Evelyn, 29, 31  
 Shuster, W. M., 88-9  
 Sibi, 60, 160, 164  
 Sikkim State, 2, 18, 13, 19, 31, 167-82, 183, 188, 192-4, 227-8, 232  
 Maharaja of, 169-71, 175-82, 184, 226-7  
 Maharaj Kumar Paljor, 177-9  
 Maharaj Kumari Pema Choden, 178, 180  
 Maharaja Sidkeong Trulku, 169  
 Siliguri, 18, 17, 169  
 Simla, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 17, 20-1, 31, 48-9, 54-7, 127, 192  
 Simon, Sir John, 182  
 Sind, 60, 150, 160, 163  
 Sirkar, Sir N. N., 158-9  
 Smith, Sir W. W., 197  
 Smyth-Osbourne, Douglas, 196  
 Smythe, Frank, 170  
 Sonam, Rai Sahib, 204, 209, 227  
 Souriya, Queen, 94, 98-9, 100, 103  
 Srinagar, 2, 91, 94, 195  
 Staunton, Harry, 209, 235, 239  
 Steele, Archibald, 202, 239  
 Steele, William, 80  
 Stein, Sir Aurel, 126-7, 199  
 Stranger, G., 94  
 Sukhani, Rai Bahadur, 180  
 Sukkur, 60, 160, 163  
 Sutlej River, 130



# INDEX

- Swat (see also Wali), 124, 110,  
123-31  
Swat River, 34, 124, 36, 41-2, 123,  
126  
Sykes, Sir Percy, 59  
Synge, Mark, 75
- Ta Lama, 27  
Tashi Lhunpo, 24, 210, 223, 226-8  
Taylor, George, 197  
Teesta Valley, 18, 17, 169, 172,  
174, 194  
Teichman, Sir Eric, 203, 234  
Thal, 108, 132, 109, 117-18, 123,  
135, 148  
Thomas, Lowell, 202  
Thorburn, Harold, 94  
Tibet, 3, 17-32, 168, 178, 183,  
188, 193, 201-43  
Tirah, 108, 93, 110-11, 121-2  
Tochi, 132, 133-5, 141, 144, 146,  
148  
Todd, Heb, 151  
Tolstoy, Ilia, 176  
Tongsa Penlop (Maharaja of  
Bhutan), 18, 184, 187, 189, 190  
Tonyot, Dr., 235  
Torsa River, 18, 183, 196  
Tracy, John Hanbury, 203  
Travancore, Maharaja of, 2, 12  
Tsang Po, 2, 18, 20, 183, 201  
Tsarong Dzasa, 206, 209, 236  
Tsendron Choda, 209  
Tucci, Professor Guiseppi, 202  
Turangzai, Haji of, 34, 36-7  
Turbat i Haidari, 60, 67-9  
Turbat Sheikh Jam, 60, 69  
Turner, Bob, 19
- Turner, Captain, 45  
Tsung-lien Shen, 202, 240
- Udaipur, Maharana of, 2, 12  
Umar Hayat Khan, Tiwana, 14
- Victoria, Queen, 11  
Vigornitzky, General, 84  
Vincent, Irene, 176
- Wakefield, Teddy and Lalage,  
164  
Wali of Swat (Sir Abdul Wadood),  
124, 110, 125-8, 131, 138, 147  
Wana, 132, 133-5, 142-4, 148  
Wardrop, A. E., 52  
Waters, H. S., 128  
Wavell, Lord and Lady, 162, 176,  
242  
Waziristan, 92, 132, 110-11, 116-  
117, 133-49  
Weir, J. L. R., 17, 203  
Welch, Courtenay, 28-9  
White, Claude, 168, 174  
Wickham, E. T. R., 96, 99  
Williams, A. de C., 67, 69  
Williamson, Harry, 167, 171, 203  
Wilson, Sir Leslie, 90  
Wilson, Paddy, 53  
Woodall, H. W. and Mrs., 45  
Wu Chung-hsin, 225
- Yatung, 18, 17, 19, 23, 25, 196  
Younghusband, Sir Francis, 22,  
74, 202, 236
- Zhob, 60, 92, 142  
Ziarat, 60, 160







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